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Creative Aspiration and Public Discourse: The Prose, Verse and Graphic Images
of William James Linton (1812-1897)

Abstract

This thesis sets out to show that William James Linton's writing as a coherent body of material is defined by his long-term preoccupation with authorship as a vocation. The argument concentrates on how this sense of vocation created the potential to combine personal creative aspiration as a form of self-fulfilment with the forms of public discourse attendant on his construction of models of culture which embraced and were adaptable to the emotional needs of the self in a society based on concepts of innate human equality. In recognising both Linton's understanding of authorship in these terms, and the cultural significance of his work as a nexus of influences, the argument offers a balanced view of his development as a writer while dealing with the ramifications of his political and cultural affiliations on the form of his writing. This contribution to current interest in Victorian artisan-class culture is balanced by an equal emphasis on perceiving Linton's work, particularly his later writing, as valuable in its own terms.

Organized into an Introduction and six chapters, the thesis begins with a discussion of the rarely utilised primary sources from which the argument has developed, and an evaluation of the rapidly growing body of critical studies on Linton's work. Chapter One deals with the biographical and cultural context of Linton's creative aspiration and public discourse as features of his political philosophy and as themes within his writing. The subsequent five chapters are a chronological survey of Linton's writing. Chapters Two to Four are particularly concerned with Linton's view of the rôle of individual creativity in political reform. Chapters Five and Six examine how he found an increasingly personal motivation for his writing while maintaining a search for an authorial voice through which to express his ideas of culture.



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Alastair Philip Lovett

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Department of English Studies

2003



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Introduction: William James Linton's Reputation and Reception

William James Linton is no longer the obscure figure 'living a tenuous life in the footnotes' of Victorian biographies and modern histories of Chartism.¹ Up until the early twentieth-century Linton was, and in many ways remains, known primarily as the engraver of some of the most well-known English and American book illustrations dating between the 1830s and 1880s. His writings on the theory and practice of wood engraving, which were received on their publication as authoritative expositions on the creative and technical aspects of the craft, are unaccountably neglected, with one exception, by modern historians of the graphic arts.² In the past ten years the emphasis in published work about or referring to Linton has shifted from his politics and craft to his output as a writer, and this has been reflected in the increasing number of sustained discussions that concentrate on specific aspects of his writing rather than selecting particular features of his political experience.

There was some attention to Linton's writing in his life time with the inclusion of his verse in literary histories by Edmund Clarence Stedman and H. Buxton Forman.³ Even a book was planned by Kineton Parkes in the late 1890s.⁴ However, with the passing of Linton's generation he found only occasional mention in isolated articles in the New England press, although a constant trickle of interest persisted throughout the twentieth-century. A selective chronological summary of statements about Linton gives

¹ F. B. Smith Radical Artisan: William James Linton 1812-97 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), p. ix. Further references will be given as Radical Artisan.

² The exception is Linton's History of Wood-Engraving in America (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1882), reprinted as Wood Engraving: An American History, ed. by Nancy Shrock (Watkins Glen: The American Life Foundation and Study Institute, 1976).

³ Edmund Clarence Stedman Victorian Poets (Boston 1876), H. Buxton Forman 'William James Linton as a Poet' Gentleman's Magazine 1879 575-592. Further references will be given as Victorian Poets, and Forman.

⁴ Kineton Parkes, William James Linton: Wood-Engraver, Painter, Poet and Politician. A biography, bibliography, catalogue and criticism, Ms 86. JJ 33 Victoria and Albert Museum, National Art Library (n.d., c. 1890s-1915). Further references will be given as Parkes Biography, and to this repository as V and A.

some idea of the different kinds of attention he has attracted both as a political activist and a writer. In these accounts Linton has been presented as: a lyric poet impeded by ‘aggressive republicanism’ who nevertheless formed a link between Shelley and Swinburne, ‘Bewick’s apostle’, a ‘manifestation of the common man’ though ‘far ahead of him in the possession of culture’, Chartist poet of bourgeois extraction, a ‘candid and cautious friend’ of Chartism, ‘a Latter-day Blake’, ‘a nexus for many important political, literary, and artistic figures of the nineteenth-century’, an ‘exemplary writer of great integrity’, and a poet who ‘occupied a vital place within the Chartist poetic milieu’ but ‘under the impact of the liberal cultural authority, [. . .] was diminished to a minor figure in high-culture poetics’.⁵

George Landow’s description of Linton as a ‘nexus’ of Victorian culture informs, in one way or another, virtually all of the statements given above. As Chapter One of this thesis shows, the nature of Linton’s life experience, and the way in which he presented it in his principal autobiographical statement Memories in 1895, has encouraged this perception of his career as a series of connections between himself, a representative of the radicalised Victorian artisan class, and the parallel worlds of political action and literary production.⁶ The term ‘nexus’ thus summarises the reasons for the variety of perspectives given above, from such diverse quarters as Soviet Marxism and Blake scholarship, because Linton’s life experience contacted so many different aspects of Victorian culture. A frequent variation of this approach would be

⁵ Forman, 577, Austin Dobson’s dedication of Bewick and his Pupils (1884), Fraser Neiman, ‘William James Linton’ unpublished PhD (Harvard 1938), p. 14, Y. V. Kovalev Anthology of Chartist Poetry (Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow 1956, Introduction translated in Victorian Studies December 1958, 117-138), Radical Artisan, Robert F Gleckner, ‘W. J. Linton, a Latter-day Blake’ Bulletin of Research in the Humanities 85 (1982), 208-227, George P. Landow, ‘“We must die in our armour”: a new Mazzini letter’ American Notes and Queries, supplement 1 (1978), 285-8, Isobel Armstrong Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 193, Anne Janowitz, Janowitz in the Romantic Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 216.

⁶ The book was first published as Threescore and Ten Years: Recollections by W. J. Linton (New York: Scribners and Sons), subsequently as Memories (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1895). The text used in this thesis is Memories, Reprints of Economic Classics (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1970). Further references will be given as Memories.

Anne Janowitz's Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition, a recent revisionist study of Victorian poetry, which proceeds by setting up an ingenious comparison between Linton and William Morris, with hints of further parallels with William Blake.⁷ From the perspective of biography or social history it has always been useful that Linton may be thought of as a 'nexus for many important political, literary, and artistic figures of the nineteenth-century', not only for Linton's view of such figures, but because their accounts of Linton allow modern readers interested in his work to construct a coherent image of a writer who occupied different public and private roles over a career that virtually spanned the Victorian period.

Linton's writing career resembles the course of his professional life as an engraver in the sense that he kept up a constant stream of consistently competent work. Most of his writing was produced in response to what would now be considered extra-literary stimuli, primarily his concerns with republicanism, working under conditions comfortable enough to permit sustained periods of journalistic and creative activity but limited by the demands of family and professional status, and defined by political convictions. These elements, in combination with Linton's limitations as a writer, mean that there is no single work in his output that exhibits a leap in verbal development and achievement, or which has exercised a decisive influence on subsequent writers, although there were significant borrowings of Linton's writing early in his career during his participation in the flowering of the Chartist press in the 1840s, and W. E Adams, under whose editorship the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle became 'one of the great provincial newspapers', was deeply affected by his contact with Linton during his time as the printer of the English Republic.⁸ The enthusiastic responses of readers in the 1880s to the youthfulness of Linton's lyric verse may indicate that he had become a

⁷ See note 4. Further references will be given as Janowitz.

⁸ John Saville, 'Introduction', The Red Republican and the Friend of the People, facsimile (London: Merlin Press, 1966), p. xv.

coterie writer, but this represents but one facet of his work in old age. However, it is perhaps the lack of any one outstanding work that lends his career so neatly to the representative approach on one hand and as a foil to well-known figures on the other.

This thesis does not dispute the interpretation of Linton as a nexus, either as a fact of his life or as a useful way of understanding the ways in which he combined his various public commitments with aspirations toward professional and creative authorship. Indeed, the first chapter takes up the nexus idea as its primary theme in exploring the type and extent of Linton's connections with different kinds of literary and political experience. This chapter discusses the ways in which Linton's self-image in Memories supports a view of his experience and writing as reflections of 'important figures' and of larger patterns of change in the Victorian period. However, for the many readers who occasionally come into contact with Linton's work, Memories, along with other public statements, has a tendency to encourage an appreciation of Linton for his relations with the culture that surrounded him rather than for the way he shaped his perceptions through his writing. The thesis seeks to address the bias towards context which the nexus interpretation tends to promote. It sets out to do this by treating Linton's writing as a body of work that can be read on its own terms.

While my argument privileges Linton's poetry, the parameters of this thesis, creative aspiration and public discourse, reflect the character of the political philosophy which informed the shape of Linton's writing in different forms across his career. In the 1830s and 40s the integration of creative aspiration and public discourse assumed the form of Linton's interest in the rôle of individual creativity in the context of political reform. As his career progressed the nature of creative aspiration and public discourse in combination became a central theme in his verse writing. However, the interest of Linton's writing lies not only in the way he used verse as an articulation of his political convictions but for the role it played in the independent outlook so often noted by those

who knew him in life. His preoccupation with the value of a tradition of literary discourse as an exploration and expression of human rights led him to emphasise elements of continuity in his own writing, often relying on traditional or established verse forms. The form and language of Linton's verse suggest that his definition of personal creativity as a function of commitment to political change was anchored to fluency of utterance as an enactment of a unified sense of the self.

There is also a strong imitative vein in Linton's poetry, a method which he used as a way of passing criticism on aspects of contemporary culture. This ability was highly regarded by Victorian readers of his poetry but dismissed by later demands for authenticity. However, one literary historian has found a sense of creative fulfilment in Linton's assumption of other poetic voices.⁹ While this imitative faculty rarely emerged as innovation, part of the fascination of reading Linton's creative and journalistic writing is the tangible sense of a writer working out problems of form and meaning. This process is particularly interesting given his concern with utopian concepts of community and individual creativity in relation to social status. When Linton did use verse to question or explore his sense of possessing a voice, his writing takes on a distinctive quality lent force by a sharpness of expression, concision of form, and an awareness of his limitations as a poet. My argument appreciates these moments in the context of creative aspiration and public discourse, particularly as elements in the writing that he produced during his life in America.

While the emphasis throughout this thesis is on verbal expression, some parts of the discussion reflect the lack of compartmentalization in the ways Linton used print. A reader's appreciation of Linton's graphic and verbal work is enriched by the contact points between them, although I emphasise the term 'contact' rather than 'integration'

⁹ Tirthankar Bose, 'William James Linton', *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, eds. William E Fredeman and Ira B. Nadel (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1984), vol. 32 *Victorian Poets Before 1850*, p. 202. Further references will be given as Bose.

as a way of describing the relationship in Linton's output between text and image. Linton's verse and graphic work maintained rather than questioned the boundaries of verbal and graphic representation. The two are distinct and separate elements throughout his work even in books over which he had complete control of typography and format. There are however some connections between the graphic and verbal in his work: the poetry took on some of the features of his engravings, such as the self-contained epigrammatic verse form, which in turn is often reflected in the type of emblematic style Linton adopted when illustrating his own poetry. References to Linton's extensive writing about wood-engraving are only used in this thesis when they illuminate his practice as a writer or if they contribute to my account of the way he thought about the relationships between form and content, and between creativity, craft, and tradition.

The chronological pattern of this thesis has been shaped by the relative coherence and accessibility of Linton's writing as a body of material which, when viewed as a whole, reflects his varied and considerable output. The apparent unity of the source material is partly due to the fact that Linton continually preserved and collected his writing. He had pondered the idea of a collected works since 1848 and constantly played with anthologies and collections of his writing throughout his career.¹⁰ His need to collect his own work in one place was partly fulfilled in Prose and Verse Written and Published in the Course of Fifty Years, 1836-1886, 'a record unique in its fullness, given Linton's lowly station'.¹¹ This twenty-volume collection of bound scrapbooks preserves otherwise ephemeral writing such as newspaper reports, pamphlets and extracts of verse, some of them with Linton's written annotations. When he deposited Prose and Verse in the British Museum Library in 1895, the librarian

¹⁰ Sketchbook 1848-49. Ms Vault Shelves Linton, Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Further reference to material from this source will be given in the notes as Beinecke.

¹¹ Radical Artisan p. 243. Further references to Prose and Verse will be given in the notes as P and V.

Richard Garnett congratulated him ‘first on having been able to perform so much over and above your work as an artist; secondly on having been able to preserve so much; and thirdly on having found so safe a place of deposit as the British Museum’.¹² The books are situated in an indeterminate area between manuscript and publication. Now in a delicate state, patterns of usage suggest that Prose and Verse is being increasingly valued as a source. Linton’s success in making himself part of British Museum Library, an institution through which he had initially constructed his own model of literary culture, is perhaps an affirmation of his interest in writing as a valuable way of ordering experience, and of his personal commitment to the free library as part of bringing liberal notions of individualism to a wider audience.

Another reason for the existence of a wealth of source material is that Linton wrote a great deal and kept his fair copies. Consequently there are several major collections of manuscripts available to the researcher. As well as Linton’s editorial work and personal correspondence, his connection with political groups, individual reformers, publishing houses and professional writers resulted in a rich heritage of hand-written material. Because Linton’s creative aspiration as a personal element in contact and combination with public discourse occupies the centre of the thesis, the discussion concentrates both on matters of composition and publication, discussing drafts, where possible, in relation to the published versions. This fresh examination of the extant primary material represents one of the contributions made by this thesis to previous literary studies of Linton’s work, many of which use only his published material.

Most major public and academic libraries in Britain and America commonly hold at least a few Linton publications, particularly in locations where he had personal connections. For instance, material relating or belonging to Linton’s associates the

¹² Richard Garnett, letter to W. J. L., 7 June 1895, Beinecke. Further note references to correspondence sources will omit the word ‘letter’.

Tyneside M.P. Joseph Cowen and the journalist W. E. Adams is now held in Newcastle City Library, Newcastle University Library, and in the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Institute. Large collections of letters, manuscripts and personal effects are held in two libraries at Yale University: the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, stored alphabetically under the designation Manuscript Vault Shelves Linton, and an uncatalogued collection in the Sterling Memorial Library Arts of the Book Department. The Beinecke collection of books, letters and manuscripts was in part the result of a series of bequests Linton made after the university awarded him an honorary M.A. in 1891. Additions were made in the 1930s by Linton's friend William Fowler Hopson.

The Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli in Milan and the National Library of Australia in Canberra both hold significant collections of letters to and from Linton.¹³ The Feltrinelli holdings are stored in five folders with individual number designations for groups of letters.¹⁴ The provenances of the Feltrinelli and NLA holdings are described by Smith.¹⁵ Also in America, the John Hay Library at Brown University, Providence, and Houghton Library at Harvard University, and various archives in the New York Public Library, hold compact but significant collections of printed and manuscript material.¹⁶

The nature of Linton's published works has been central to my discussion of how he combined aspirations toward poetic creativity with specific public commitments over his writing career. Whilst virtually all of Linton's books are out of print, they are available for consultation in major repositories such as the British Library. However, the establishment of accurate texts, particularly of poems in manuscript form, printed in newspapers or available only in rare books, has formed a significant part of the research

¹³ Further references to these sources will be given as SML, Feltrinelli and NLA.

¹⁴ References will be given in the notes of the thesis as 3/12, etc.

¹⁵ *Radical Artisan*, pp. 242-43.

¹⁶ Further references to these sources will be given as Hay, Houghton and NYPL.

for this thesis. A great deal of Linton's poetry is readily accessible through the English Poetry Full-Text database, but the absence of Broadway Ballads: Collected for the Centennial Commemoration of the Republic (1875), Linton's most characteristic and well-crafted work, is a significant omission from this source.¹⁷ A complete bibliography of Linton's published writing exists in Kinton Parkes's Biography, a tapestry of typeset and hand-written chapters, cuttings and correspondence. The extensive hand-written bibliography gives a complete list of Linton's publications but due to institutional restrictions it is not available for any form of reproduction other than photographic.

The completeness of the bibliographical record is offset by the dispersal of Linton's published and unpublished writing across far-flung special collections and academic libraries. This means that the act of simply reading certain aspects of Linton's work requires time, a specific knowledge of the period and of academic institutions, a fact rendered ironic when the political objectives Linton advocated are taken into account. The modern experience of reading Linton is also rendered fragmentary by the scarcity of modern editions of his work, except in cases where historians of Victorian society have detected the relevance of his ideas to key political movements such as Chartism, or to the development of class-consciousness. Reprints that fit into this pattern would include the modern edition of Memories and the reprint of Linton's biography of James Watson.¹⁸ The difficulty for a non-academic reader is that a balanced appreciation of Linton's work can only develop through activities generally considered as scholarly, such as the examination of unpublished manuscript material and equally rare, because rarely reprinted, published works.

¹⁷ English Poetry Full-Text Database, Cambridge Chadwyck-Healey 1992, online, internet.

¹⁸ For Memories see note 5. James Watson: A Memoir (1879), ed. by Victor E. Neuberg, Literacy and Society 5, second series (London: Woburn Press, 1971). Further references will be given as James Watson.

This situation has changed slightly since the late 1980s, when, apart from exceptions such as The Everyman's Book of Victorian Verse, Linton rarely appeared in modern anthologies.¹⁹ Anne Janowitz, in her study of the poetry produced by Chartist writers, ascribes the recent interest in poetry with Chartist connections to the expansion of certain scholarly practices, particularly the 'growth of cultural history in the 1980s' which 'opened up avenues for locating the importance of Chartist literary production'.²⁰ A summary of the recent literary reception and reprinting of Linton's work is essential in the context of this introduction because of the increased frequency of literary criticism that refers to his writing, and for the relevance of recently published studies of Victorian culture to the themes of this thesis.

The discussions of Linton's writing published in his lifetime tended to concentrated on a single aspect of his work. While individual articles made reference to the diversity of his work, the discussions tended to be limited by the writer's particular interest, such as Fred G. Kitton's which opens: 'On whom could the mantle of the great Novocastrian artist [Bewick] more fittingly descend than upon [Mr. Linton]?'²¹ The earliest published material on Linton's work was in the form of short articles in periodicals by those who knew Linton in life, or brief surveys in literary reference works, such as Stedman's 1876 Victorian Poets. Stedman presented Linton as part of the 'significant chorus' of 'political rhymers' associated with the Nation in the 1840s, a 'born reformer, who relieved his eager spirit by incessant poeticizing'. Stedman offered the 1865 Claribel and Other Poems, Linton's attempt to win public recognition for the range of his verse writing, as a 'collection of more finished poetry' in comparison with early verse 'devoted to liberal and radical propagandism', implying that as a collection

¹⁹ Everyman's Book of Victorian Verse, ed. by J. R. Watson (London: Dent, 1982).

²⁰ Janowitz, p. 137.

²¹ Fred G. Kitton, 'William James Linton, Engraver, Poet, and Political Writer', English Illustrated Magazine, (April 1891), 491-500, p. 491.

Claribel represented a definitive work.²² Harry Buxton Forman became interested in Linton while seeking information on the publishing history of Shelley's poetry in 1875. In his article on Linton's poetry Forman found little to recommend in his synthesis of politics and verse. As Janowitz points out in Lyric and Labour, Forman lifted Linton out of the political tradition in his discussion.

The earliest sustained study of Linton was an attempt at biography by Kinton Parkes, which remained unpublished.²³ Parkes discovered Linton in 1890 while compiling The Painter Poets for the Canterbury Poets Series, and he assisted Linton in the 1891 re-publication of the English Republic.²⁴ This was followed by an article on Linton's poetry in 1898.²⁵ Despite his attempt to encompass Linton's diversity in the biography, and his extensive bibliographical compilation, impressive in its own right, Parkes's view of Linton circles round vague considerations of him as a representative man of the era of improvement. The most interesting feature of Parkes's work is his surviving correspondence with Linton's daughter, which shows the reticence of Linton's contemporaries to write at length about him. These letters are useful in giving rare insights into Linton's personal life.

Hamden, Connecticut, Linton's adopted home, commemorated him with a plaque in 1936 to mark his house on State Street in the shadow of East Rock. On the whole, however, the early twentieth-century forgot Linton, apart from scattered recollections by American friends, such as the engraver William Fowler Hopson, whose 1933 article allows us to glimpse the geniality that old age brought out in Linton's personality.²⁶ A rare reference from this time to Linton as a writer appears in a

²² Victorian Poets, pp. 260-61, 270-71. Claribel and Other Poems (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1865). Further references will be given as Claribel.

²³ See note 3.

²⁴ The Painter Poets, ed. by Kinton Parkes (London: Walter Scott), The English Republic: A Selection (London: Sonnenschein, 1891). Parkes Biography, ch. 27.

²⁵ 'The Poetry of William James Linton', New Century Review, 3 (1898), 136-38.

²⁶ 'Side lights on William James Linton, 1812-97', Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, 27 (1933), 74-82.

discussion about Victorian translations of Villon which found Linton's to be 'deft and accomplished', revealing a little-known side of his output.²⁷ Fraser Neiman's early and thorough account of Linton's career contains useful information from surviving family and friends, but the emphasis on Linton as an unusually cultured 'manifestation of the common man' foregrounds the journalism. Neiman's extremely brief discussions of Linton's verse writing lack sensitivity to the different kinds of response that the poems create.²⁸

The reappraisal of Linton's reputation as a writer in the past ten years derives from realignments in the literary map suggested in a string of academic studies and publications which are generally acknowledged to have been inspired by Y. V. Kovalev's Anthology of Chartist Poetry.²⁹ This anthology stimulated a revival of interest in the Chartist press and the writing printed in it. The selections from Linton re-established the political inflections of his output by reprinting the verse of the Chartist years. This publication is still referred to with scholarly reverence as the first collection of Chartist writing. At one point it was the only readily accessible source for the texts of many poems, and, in the absence of similar publications, remains an important feature of critical work in the field. Subsequent anthologies have relied heavily on Kovalev for the texts of Linton's poems, such as Peter Sheckner's.³⁰

Francis Barrymore Smith's 1973 biography Radical Artisan is a fine work of scholarship distinguished by being the only full-length book on Linton. Smith's account is sympathetic to the rhythms of Linton's life and benefits from historical insight into many of the obscure writers and artists with whom he was associated. On

²⁷ Oliver Elton, A Survey of English Literature 1830-1880 (London: Arnold, 1920), 2 vols, 2 p. 65.

²⁸ Fraser Neiman, 'William James Linton' (unpublished PhD, Harvard University, 1938). Further references will be given as Neiman.

²⁹ See note 4 above. Further references will be given as Kovalev.

³⁰ An Anthology of Chartist Poetry: Poetry of the British Working Class, 1830s-1850s ed. by Peter Sheckner (London: Associated Univ. Presses, c. 1989). The texts in this book are unreliable, marred by errors and inaccurate references. Further references will be given as Sheckner.

the crucial matter of Chartist affiliations, Smith concludes that Linton's 'relation to the Chartist agitations during the late 1830s and early 1840s was that of a candid and cautious friend'.³¹ Smith's biography has been an indispensable inspiration during the course of my research. However, his readings and use of Linton's poetry, and his view of Linton's relationships with literary culture, bear closer examination.

A 1974 book by Martha Vicinus, a work which forms part of the rise of cultural history, provided a major impetus to the study of the cultural activities in which members of the Victorian working classes participated. Brian Maidment's 1987 annotated anthology is a self-confessed working out of the ideas raised by Vicinus.³² Significant amounts of Linton's writing have been reprinted in Maidment's book which, along with Lytic and Labour, has exercised the strongest influence on the shape of my argument, particularly Maidment's comment that 'neither patronage nor idealization offer a proper approach' to writers like Linton. Maidment's commentary is primarily concerned with the ways in which Victorian, and subsequent, models of the working class writer have determined not only the transmission of Victorian artisan writing but also how commentators and critics could, and did, influence the creative act. Maidment's introductory essays, and the works he has included in the anthology, relate closely to this thesis because they touch on every aspect of Linton's career, especially the ways self-taught writers used verse in the context of their specific public commitments and creative aspirations. Although Linton was self-taught only in the loosest sense of the term, and cannot be called working-class, at least not as readily as the other leading authors in the book, Joseph Skipsey and J. C. Prince, his writing does benefit from Maidment's sympathetic readings in the context of a Victorian proletarian

³¹ Radical Artisan, p. 34.

³² Martha Vicinus, The Industrial Muse: A Study of Nineteenth Century British Working-Class Literature (London: Croom Helm, 1974), Brian Maidment, The Poorhouse Fugitives: Self Taught Poets and Poetry in Victorian Britain (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1987), p. 18. Further references will be given as Vicinus and Maidment.

concept of agitation supported by aspects of creative aspiration, such as writing and publishing verse. Linton's self-image as an author is broadly reflected in the kind of high cultural aims that Maidment characterises as typical of 'Parnassian' creative aspiration: '[Parnassian] poets both wish to be compared with the highly educated established literary figures and to insist on their distinctiveness as writers who endured low social status'.³³ The accuracy of the description 'low social status' varies depending on the milieux we catch Linton within at different points in his career, but the elements of Parnassian aspiration are clearly present in Linton's experience and writing. Maidment views these poets as extremely important in literary history: 'It is easy now to see the Parnassian endeavour by self-taught writers as politically diversionary, as an absurd misreading of the cultural and political needs of the emergent working classes. Yet [. . .] the "appropriate" or "alternative" modes which might have arisen from a coherent working-class view of the changes taking place in early industrial Britain were not easily to be found'.³⁴ Maidment detects an increasing introversion of the concerns of artisan writing across the century as they developed uncertainly between public commitments such as Chartism and the high cultural Parnassian aspirations.

The concepts Maidment introduces in his commentary have been paralleled by scholarly attention to the idea that the Victorian 'working and middle class write from quite different centres of experience' when representing the community or ideas of identity.³⁵ The reasons for the fact that the poetry produced by Chartists or associates of the movement remained unknown for most of the twentieth-century form the core of Ulrike Schwab's study of Chartist poetry is concerned with the critical reception and

³³ Maidment, p. 97. The chapter is headed with the photographic portrait of Linton from his Poems and Translations (London: John C. Nimmo, 1889).

³⁴ Maidment, p. 186.

³⁵ Isobel Armstrong, Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics (London: Routledge, 1993) p. 196. Further references will be given as Armstrong.

anthologisation of 'Chartist poetry', which Schwab describes as 'the collective utterance of the movement', rather than prose fiction which 'must be considered the attainments of individual authors'. Linton figures as a 'lyric author' who '[hardly] belonged to the movement all the time', but Schwab's argument contains some valuable suggestions for understanding the transmission and reception of Linton's writing, which, in his earlier prose and verse, shared the Chartist poetics of collective expression. Schwab begins with the idea that appreciation over the course of literary history is consciously or unconsciously stunted by normative interpretive criteria informing the choices of readers, arguing that the obscurity or currency of Chartist poetry has as much to do with the purpose and expectations of a readership as with the 'readability' or innate qualities of the work. A strong theme in her study is the relationship for a modern readership between poetry 'setting out from social reality' and the historical facts themselves: many of the reviews and anthologies she scrutinises 'avoid associating a piece of literature with the attendant events of the time'. The cultural factors involved in twentieth-century canon-formation, Schwab suggests, misunderstand or fail to consider the functionality of Chartist verse: 'if approached with reservations the poems do not "speak"'.³⁶ In short, Schwab argues that Chartist poetry must be understood as deriving not only from the writers' concerns with the resonance of Chartist concepts of community and identity, but also with Chartist concerns for finding a place for verse within existing public discourse, rather than with the expression of individual responses to inward concerns. Schwab describes how verse was understood as a form of collective expression in the intentions of the writers and in its purpose within a journalistic framework. The viability of Linton's poetry in both journalistic and literary contexts is one of the main themes of this thesis.

³⁶ The Poetry of the Chartist Movement (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), pp. 15-16, 18. Further references in the notes will be given as Schwab.

Widely regarded as a paradigm-breaking work, Isobel Armstrong's major 1993 study of Victorian poetry refers to Linton as an exemplary writer 'of great integrity' in a chapter that discusses poetry produced during the repeated shocks of change in the mid century. Linton is mentioned in relation to his Chartist writing which she illustrates by including one of the 1839 'Hymns' in the form of an endnote.³⁷ Armstrong acknowledges the range of writing produced by artisans or those of lowly social status, but finds a re-direction of creative energies in the careers of writers like Gerald Massey, Thomas Cooper and Linton 'when the immediate force of [Chartism] died'. As important voices in the context of their Chartist connections, these writers illustrate 'the plight of the self-taught artisan poet in particular once Chartism dissolved as a political movement. Linton turned to the Italian question and Cooper ultimately to religion as a way of redirecting and re-forming creative energy'.³⁸

Armstrong's view of Chartism as a binding force on the poetic creativity of its individual participants is rehearsed in Anne Janowitz's Lyrical and Labour, which includes the most recent sustained study of Linton's work and career. A detailed account of this book is given here because the second half of this thesis seeks to address the imbalance that has been created by the way Janowitz presents Linton, particularly the fact that her argument excludes his later writing. Lyrical and Labour is essentially about the ways in which poetic forms acted for Victorians as means of perceiving and reflecting concepts of self and sociality, applying Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony. Janowitz places Linton within the Victorian 'politico-poetic' tradition which she traces from the 'romantic engagement of competing theories of identity' as it became increasingly dominated by the individualist concepts of identity through the

³⁷ Armstrong, p. 193, 509n.

³⁸ Armstrong, p. 196.

Victorian period.³⁹ Her discussion describes this process as a divergence of communitarian and individualistic forms of expression as the century progressed.

Janowitz's often compelling argument closely follows the major Romantic poets and themes as tangible influences on the writers who were part of the Chartist movement, describing these influences in terms of a cross-fertilization of styles rather than as patterns of imitation. In her argument, the Chartist awareness of the communitarian elements within Romantic poetics created a politically aware interventionist literature characterised by a distinctive, class-specific use of poetry that combined the communitarian forms such as ballad, song, hymn, celebration, and literary forms of expression; sonnet, epic, elegy. By virtue of his involvements with Chartism, Linton is included as a writer who 'had occupied a vital place within the Chartist poetic milieu'.⁴⁰ Janowitz sees Linton as a part of this persistence of the Romantic exploration of identity through poetry. In the process, she marks out the literary historical significance of communitarian poetics to the study of Victorian literature, as well as the importance of a communitarian literary tradition to Victorian writers and audiences aware of and concerned with the balanced requirements of interiority and community. Consequently, Janowitz views Linton as a prominent and active creative presence in relation to this 'counter hegemony', bringing into her discussion Linton's journalism, poetry and an awareness of his abilities as an engraver.

At the centre of Janowitz's chapter on Linton is a reading of some of the English Republic poems, the 'Rhymes and Reasons Against Landlordism', a sequence which 'presents a genre which solves the problem of both meeting the affective needs of the individual through lyricism, and the narrative aims of the collective struggle'.⁴¹ Janowitz gives the 'Rhymes and Reasons Against Landlordism' as a statement in which

³⁹ Janowitz, p. 226

⁴⁰ Janowitz, p.216

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 211.

'Linton's theory of poetry takes as given the autonomy and a priori asociality of identity, and then presses hard towards a sense of the social as affiliative [. . .] Linton's best poems are those which take up and engage with the problem of finding a voice for the claims to collective civic subjectivity'.⁴² This idea of Linton's search for a voice is apposite, but she compares these poems with his verse writing from the 1860s, leading to a conclusion that he was unsuccessful in sustaining a tradition of writing according to the terms of his own 'politico-poetic' project. Janowitz suggests that the innovations and creative acts that came out of this search were spent in Linton's writing after the English Republic through a combination of factors that culminated in his ultimate withdrawal from active participation in politics in the 1870s.⁴³ Implicit in the way Janowitz's argument develops is the effect of Linton's emigration on his ability to participate in the new political language of socialism. Janowitz argues that Linton's poetry 'enacts the contest of self and community [. . .] His poetry searches for a way of highlighting the autonomy of the self, while being inflected by a strong sense of class-consciousness', his lyrics of 'isolated subjectivity' written after the English Republic poetry are 'nondescript, almost anonymous'.⁴⁴ This point is difficult to contest given the specimens she chooses from Claribel, a collection praised by Stedman in his 1876 appraisal of Linton's poetry. Some of the verse from Claribel might appear to bear out Janowitz's point that contemporary readers such as Stedman and Forman preferred the side of his output that was devoid of political purpose or connotations. However, Janowitz needs to shift the original terms of Stedman's discussion when quoting from it: where he wrote of Linton as 'a born reformer' she substitutes the term 'a Chartist poet', which was quite different, but which she considers a more accurate

⁴² Janowitz, p. 204.

⁴³ *ibid.*, pp 196-200.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 203, 204.

description of his intentions and productions.⁴⁵ Janowitz also uses Forman's 1879 article 'William James Linton as a Poet' as an example of another contemporary who placed Linton's work in a liberal lineage and drew an emphatic division between Linton's politics and his creativity. Forman had to emphasise a particular line of development in Linton's verse because the Chartist poetic writing of the 1840s had not succeeded in creating a strong and distinctive working class culture of creativity, although Maidment has detected a continuity: 'Chartist and radical poetry has always survived as part of the proper endeavour of the socialist movement to retain a sense of the history of oppositional cultural activity'.⁴⁶ Most of Linton's poems that would now be described as Chartist works had become by the latter part of the century illustrations of historical events rather than individual works in their own right, reprinted 'to show the successive forms and phases assumed by the concept of liberty'. His early verse was anthologised under headings such as 'Poets of the New Day (humanity-free thought-political, social and artistic reform)'.⁴⁷

The discussion of Linton's poetry in Lyrical and Labour implies that his most effective writing seems to work only within its original discursive or journalistic context, leading to difficulties in its availability for modern readers, consequently affecting a wider appreciation and understanding of the verse. Janowitz describes Linton's poetic writing in the 1860s-70s as verse that merely echoes 'within the authority of the lyric of solitude', demonstrating that 'by the late 1870s, in Linton's mind there was a large gap between political and lyric poetry'. She bases this partly on the choices that Linton made of his own poetry for English Verse (1884), the anthology he edited with Richard Henry Stoddard. Among his own poems Linton included the

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 204.

⁴⁶ Maidment, p.16

⁴⁷ Henry Stephens Salt, to William James Linton, 28 January 1892, regarding the anthology Songs of Freedom, Beinecke. A Victorian Anthology 1837-1895, ed. by Edmund Clarence Stedman (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1895).

final poem from the 'Rhymes', 'The Happy Land', the effect of which is 'built upon the earlier [poems] and only takes on its force within a republican argument by virtue of the narrative momentum which makes this final poem a utopian presentation of the *English Republic*'. She goes on to show that republication of 'The Happy Land' as a separate poem in an anthology not only removed it from its context, but altered its meaning: 'in the context of asocial lyricism, the poem is shorn of its place at the end of a cumulative poetic argument about harnessing the past to the possibility of a republican future'.⁴⁸ This is linked in her argument to the view that Linton's theoretical position in the 1870s led to his isolation from developments in class-consciousness, particularly the growth of British socialism and trade unionism through that decade.

However, the chapter on Linton in Lyric and Labour works by advancing a contrast between one of his first publications, the National, and the 'public conclusion to Linton's politico-literary life', the presentation of Prose and Verse to the British Museum Library in 1895. In her argument, Prose and Verse 'makes a poignant counterpoint' to the National, a 'brilliant attempt to fashion a people's cultural milieu', an 'intervention into the shaping of the counter-cultural field'. Prose and Verse on the other hand is 'irreproducible [. . .] rarely examined, except by archivists'. This contrast, in Janowitz's view, is emblematic of the development of Linton's authorship: 'Linton's presentation of his Prose and Verse to the British Museum binds his two poetic ambitions together: to leave a complete record of his life as a radical poet-artisan, and to be accepted as a lyric poet in the closed circle of the Reading Room'.⁴⁹ Furthermore, this contrast represents a shift and dissipation of the invention and formal synthesis in Linton's work in the 1840s and 1850s toward the relative limitations of the 'closed circle' of individual aspirant who ended as a willing participant in the liberal hegemony.

⁴⁸ Janowitz, p. 216, 213, 216.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 201-02

The truncated portrayal thus presents Linton's writing career as ending in very different terms from his early desire to be a people's poet accessible to millions. The form of his early aspirations thus seem ironic in Janowitz's account. However, while Linton did express a desire to be part of the 'closed circle' of the British Library Reading Room, this was just one aspect of his intentions during the later stages of his life. Linton's presentation of Prose and Verse suggests that he was thinking of artisans and workers, autodidacts without an extended formal education who, like himself in 1837, made use of the Reading Room to independently work out a cultural tradition. As Garnett's letter suggests, there was no safer, or widely accessible, location than the reading room of the literary institute or major city public library.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the deposition of Prose and Verse was not an isolated, final act: from the mid 1860s Linton was constantly leaving volumes of his work in literary institutes and local free libraries on both sides of the Atlantic.⁵¹ Prose and Verse may validly be used as the 'public conclusion' to Linton's career, but it was also part of a broader gesture rather than the isolated and exclusive act that the terms of Janowitz's argument allow.

Janowitz's conclusion presents Linton's career as a reflection of an abandoned Victorian 'struggle to claim and shape an alternative, "people's" literary canon', and because the term 'embedded' represents a positive value in her study, the inward elegiac features inherent in Linton's concept of individual potential articulated in the English Republic and its poems 'trapped him in contradictions which left him politically unmoored'.⁵² She sees the poetry's failure to create a truly communitarian culture reflected in its movement away from sociality towards an individuality that she finds valueless. She concludes that 'within the argument of this study, Linton provides an interesting example of how the hegemony of individualism became a strand in an

⁵⁰ Richard Garnett, to W. J. L., 7 June 1895, Beinecke.

⁵¹ London Library, to W. J. L., 21 December 1863, Feltrinelli 3/14, Henry Campkin, to W. J. L., 19 January 1864, Feltrinelli 2/22.

⁵² Janowitz, p. 223, 194, 196.

otherwise social lyric construction. But under the impact of the liberal cultural authority Linton was diminished to a minor figure in high-culture poetics'.⁵³ While she acknowledges the boundaries of her account, it is unclear from her use of 'diminished' in the passive voice how she intends such a crucial term to be understood. She suggests that this diminishment was a gradual process that began some time in the 1860s. This aspect of Janowitz's account, the division of Linton's verse in the English Republic from his later writing, gives the impression that his interventional verse gradually gave way to lyric anonymity and isolation on the terms of liberal cultural values in exactly the same way that his experiences as an emigrant in America led to his withdrawal in the late 1870s from active participation in European political allegiances.

Consequently, her discussion moves rapidly through the 1860s and 70s, gliding over in a few short paragraphs the years in which Linton produced some of his most interesting writing. The effect in Lyric and Labour of locating Linton within a unified Chartist culture has therefore been at the expense of an exploration of the synthesis of creative aspiration and public discourse in his writing that was not directly related to earlier political affiliations. Janowitz's approach thus illustrates the problem of finding a place for Linton's work in literary history: so much of his output is sent out to the margins of possible discussion if it is contained by the needs and aims of a particular agenda. Inclusivity is one of the primary justifications for the way this thesis attempts to present Linton as a writer whose work is valid in its own right. Chapter Six in particular seeks to address Janowitz's evaluation of Linton's writing after his emigration.

A valuable aspect of Janowitz's book, apart from her readings of Linton's poetry, is her emphasis on reappraising modern high-cultural uneasiness with the ways in which Victorian radical or Chartist groups embraced lyric and oral forms of expression in a synthesis of literary creativity and politics. The terms of her argument

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 216

imply that the failure of Linton's writing to find a modern place and audience is explained by his interest in the inter dependence of poetry and politics in one sense, and that the poetry that Linton produced without political quest is ineffective. In addition, there was what she calls the liberal hegemony and its effect on his later writing. Linton had retreated from the practical ramifications of European politics, missing developments in English socialism in the 1870s. His protest verse became mismatched to the needs of the time, but his withdrawal becomes a search for personal creativity informed by his past meditations on political themes. The problem with Linton's prominent place in Lyric and Labour derives from an interpretation of his life as a series of retreats.

This Introduction shows that writers in the field of Victorian studies differ in their explanations for the relative scarcity of Linton's writing in modern anthologies and studies of Victorian poetry. A significant aspect of Linton's obscurity may be due to the fact that his verse writing sits uncomfortably with the work of contemporaries whose work shared similar intentions but whose preoccupations make their careers more appealing to literary or social historians, such as Thomas Cooper or Gerald Massey. Where modern commentators do concur is that the development of Linton as a writer, and the entire tendency of Victorian working class creativity, was towards individual rather than collective creative concerns. The polarisation of lyric from public protest does occur in Linton's writing, but I intend to argue that this does not diminish the innate qualities of his work, which retains interest beyond social historical curiosity.

A very different side of the reception history investigates Linton's relationship with the work of William Blake, a relationship that has its recorded beginnings in Linton's work with a large engraving by Linton of Blake's 'Death's Door' in 1860 for

an Art Union celebration of British artists.⁵⁴ This was followed by the 1863 Life of W. Blake for which Linton produced many of the illustrations.⁵⁵ Several contemporaries were reminded of William Blake when looking into Linton's output. One of Linton's books reminded Frederick Locker Lampson of The Songs of Innocence, and W. E. Adams compared Linton to Blake, a comparison due mainly to the apparent similarity of their lives as engravers and writers.⁵⁶ Robert F. Gleckner has refined our knowledge of this aspect of Linton's work in two articles: 'W. J. Linton's Tailpieces in Gilchrist's Life of William Blake' and 'W. J. Linton, a Latter-day Blake'.⁵⁷ In the latter Gleckner argued for the *zeitgeist* of Blake in Linton's independent working practices and in his extensive commentaries on wood engraving as an art rather than an imitative craft. Gleckner concluded that, 'it is difficult to imagine a more Blake-like man and career'.⁵⁸ Another example of this strand of the reception of Linton's work is Stewart Crehan's oblique reference in Blake in Context (1984); 'the republican, artisanal viewpoint, whose roots lay in the struggles of the 1790s, can still be felt in the nineteenth-century working-class tradition'. In Crehan's view Linton was an example of this persistence: 'a wood engraver, journalist and poet who knew and was to some extent influenced by Blake's art'.⁵⁹ We must be alert however to the generality of 'can still be felt' and 'to some extent'. Both Armstrong and Janowitz say that Linton was influenced by Blake's poetry to the point of stating that Linton was 'responsible for assimilating Blake to the radical poetic tradition'. Janowitz refers to research in progress which will show how

⁵⁴ Plate X in Thirty Pictures by Deceased British Artists (n.p., Art Union, 1860). Linton's engraving was the frontispiece in the second edition of Chatto's A Treatise on Wood-Engraving (London: H. G. Bohn, 1861).

⁵⁵ Alexander Gilchrist, Life of W. Blake, "Pictor Ignotus", ed. by Anne Gilchrist, with the assistance of D. G. and W. M. Rossetti, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1863). Further references will be given as Gilchrist Blake.

⁵⁶ Frederick Locker, to W. J. L., 24 May 1882, Feltrinelli 4/1, W. E. Adams Our American Cousins (London: Hutchinson, 1903), 2 vols, p. 293.

⁵⁷ Robert F. Gleckner, 'W. J. Linton's Tailpieces in Gilchrist's Life of William Blake', Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, 14 (Spring 1981), 208-211. 'W. J. Linton, a Latter-day Blake' Bulletin of Research in the Humanities, 85 (1982), 208-227. Further references to the latter will be given as Gleckner.

⁵⁸ Gleckner, p. 226.

⁵⁹ Stewart Crehan, Blake in Context (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1984), p. 177.

Linton 'integrated pieces of Blake's work into his own'.⁶⁰ Initial impressions from Linton's biographical profile might suggest parallels such as these. For instance, both Blake and Linton emerged from the London artisan community as articulate and gifted craftsmen, both practised engraving and writing, they held politically radical views and felt compelled to express them. However, the similarities and potential points of comparison in the search for parallels tend to obscure the qualities of Linton's work. My argument, in an attempt to sidestep parallels based on internal evidence, has dealt with Linton's responses to Blake in the context of how and why he made them.

Chapter One of the thesis seeks to deal with the diversity of Linton's output and career by using as much contemporary information as possible. The biographical nature of this chapter is intended to serve two purposes: to orientate the reader within Linton's culture before moving into the subsequent discussion of the themes of creative aspiration and public discourse, and to chart Linton's acts of self-fashioning which relate to these themes. Beginning with a biographical outline drawn primarily from Memories, Chapter One contextualises Linton by mapping out his acts of self-fashioning in his memoirs and published works, and explores how these public gestures correlate with other sources. The basis of this chapter is an exploration of the idea of Linton as a nexus of culturally significant events and people, and how this is complicated in his autobiographical writing by his understanding of his experiences and writing in terms that closely match, and promote, the nexus pattern. The biography follows the development of political awareness in Linton's work, which represents a continued sense of creative freedom into old age in a self-sustaining inner intellectual life expressed through lyric poetry and editorial activities. Furthermore, the chronological account of Linton's sixty-year publishing career given in this chapter records a writer experimenting with form, dealing with different audiences and

⁶⁰ Janowitz, p. 197, 199.

ambitiously tackling contemporary problems over a period when the new audiences and methods of publication were developing, as described by Richard Altick.⁶¹ Chapter One clarifies the roots of these various activities by concentrating on Linton's view of himself.

Chapters Two and Three move into a closer discussion of creative aspiration and public discourse through a study of Linton's work between 1833 and 1840, years in which most of Linton's writing assumed the form of separate, short articles with distinct polemical objectives. This early published writing shows Linton in several roles: the non-professional writer sympathetic to the central themes of reform: labour value, capital, land ownership, the political condition of England, and of European states that had lost national identity and independence through the post-Napoleonic settlement of 1815. These themes were Linton's initial stimuli for the act of writing and publishing in the 1830s and 40s. While these concerns were prevalent in artisan class writing from the 1820s onwards, this chapter brings out the fact that Linton encountered the liberal culture of his time on his own terms, often through literary form in an outlook unified by a sustained commitment to a concept of society where the fulfilment of individual potential and difference was compatible with communal duty. In its form and content Linton's first sustained work, the National, a periodical he produced through 1839, is emblematic of this dual focus on the self in society, and is an example of his active engagement with definitions of the self and society.

Chapter Four is a continuation of this argument into the 1840s, ending with Linton's move to Lancashire in 1849. This Chapter deals with a relatively short but extremely productive period that ended in 1855 with the cessation of Linton's periodical the English Republic. The beginning of the chapter develops the discussion of Linton's occupation of different types of authorial activity at any given time in his career as a

⁶¹ Richard D. Altick, The English Common Reader (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

writer, showing how the verse he produced and published over the period 1849-1855 implies a variety of readers. Journalistic activities at this time show Linton's versatility: he was simultaneously writing for very different kinds of publication, such as the Leader and George Julian Harney's Red Republican. Linton's experience of writing for different purposes and audiences, his interest in the emotional ramifications of Mazzini's republican programme, and close understanding of verse form gives his poetry a personal character and strength which found a purpose and audience outside the limited readership available to him through vehicles like the English Republic.

Chapter Five attempts to depart from the accepted biographical pattern in that it emphasises the continuities between Linton's life in Britain and America during the process of his emigration rather in terms of a complete break.

Chapter Six is concerned with his work between 1875 and his activities up to his death in 1897. The peculiarity of Linton's work after the mid 1870s is that he printed most of it several years after the dates of composition, such as Broadway Ballads, written in 1875 but printed in 1893, and Heliocundrums also printed in 1892 but written earlier. Based on internal evidence and personal documents this chapter treats most of this material from the perspective of its function in Linton's creative life rather than in the context of the publication dates. As indicated earlier in the Introduction, the bulk of Linton's public writing after the late 1870s concerned wood-engraving, but he was constantly reflecting on his past experience in poems which remain unpublished or may only be found in his Appledore editions, discussed in the context of Linton's career as a writer.

The Bibliography is not intended as a complete account of Linton's output, but includes only those works discussed or referred to in the thesis.

Chapter One: Linton's Creative Aspiration and Public Discourse in a Biographical Context

At the time of William James Linton's birth in 1812 his family were prosperous residents of Ireland's Row on the Mile End Road in the East End of London.¹ A highly literate education and early ability evinced in Linton's drawing lessons led to the sixteen year-old's entry as an apprentice in 1828 into the workshop of wood-engraver George Wilmot Bonner, a pupil of Bewick's contemporary Robert Branston. During and directly after his apprenticeship years Linton developed close and sustained contact with liberal and Chartist reformers, forming connections with liberal and radical reform organisations which inspired his earliest writing.

From 1841 Linton came under the magnetic influence of the Italian revolutionary leader Guiseppe Mazzini, who remained Linton's single most important political and personal inspiration. In the midst of this activity was Linton's involvement in the notorious 1844 letter opening episode. Through an idea of Linton's, it was proved that Mazzini's letters were being systematically intercepted and opened with the knowledge of the postal authorities, leading to parliamentary scandal.²

Through the 1840s Linton nurtured his reputation as an engraver. At the same time his idealistic energy led to his accepting the role of secretary for the People's International, formed in 1847 by Mazzini. In his work for the League Linton found a public sphere in which to articulate a full response to the continental revolutions in 1848, a year well documented in his own writing. Linton was deputed by the League to present an address to the provisional government in Paris. Mazzini left to manage the revolutions in Italy, and the League fragmented. Linton was a well-known figure in

¹ Family background in *Memories* Ch. 1 and 2, Linton's obituary in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, 4 January 1898, and other personal documents and letters.

² *Memories*, pp. 52-53.

republican publishing and public meetings, but this high profile activity had detrimental consequences to Linton's professional security. Involvement with revolutionary causes was taking its toll on his standing with clients of the engraving firm, primarily because he was devoting so much time to political activities rather than managing the business and supervising apprentices. In May 1849 with his engraving workshop fragmented and political ideals disappointed, he moved with his family to an isolated house in Miteside, Lancashire, thence to Brantwood on the shores of Coniston in Cumbria.³

Linton lent his expertise to various radical publications through the 1840s. His ideas for a republican journal came to fruition with his periodical the English Republic (January 1851-April 1855). As an engraver in the 1850s Linton was highly renowned, but by autumn of 1866 lack of work was causing him to look to the new world.

Linton's ostensible reason for travelling to America was, as Mazzini's agent, to revive American branches of the People's International League. The New York press was effusive in its recognition that a major talent had arrived. Linton capitalised on this financial security, exchanging his radical credentials and reputation for membership and attendance at the various abolitionist meetings still being held after the war.⁴

Acceptance into American culture was, however, finally symbolised for Linton by his membership of the Century Club, a prestigious New York group presided over by William Cullen Bryant and including Walt Whitman and Edmund Clarence Stedman.⁵

Drawn to Boston but dependent on New York for work, Linton settled in 1870 for mid-way: Appledore, a house in Hamden, Connecticut. In it he set up a press from which he printed and issued editions of his own work. Reluctantly, Linton sold Brantwood to Ruskin in September 1871, effectively severing the final substantial link

³ Memories, pp. 74-76.

⁴ Invitation to radical Club meetings, Reverend John T. Sargent, to W. J. L., 14 November 1868, Beinecke.

⁵ Memories, p. 221.

with England.⁶ Linton's engraving was valued by publishers and the public, and the country's most prominent engravers publicly acknowledged his influence on their work. As an elected a member of National Academy of Design, Linton could engage fully with American artistic culture.

Linton's old age was active. Through the 1870s and 80s he wrote histories of engraving, and offered advice to younger wood engravers and disciples. He was well-liked, particularly by young people, whom he treated with deference.⁷ The Memoir of James Watson, The Masters of Wood Engraving, Memories and Prose and Verse covered between them virtually every aspect of Linton's public life and satisfied contemporary curiosity in his varied activities.

The above account of Linton's life is based solely on his account in Memories, the public face of his career, and a work that encapsulates his desire for appreciation. It was his last major piece of writing, and, unquestioned, gives a strong impression of a consistent individualism and independence during a period when the defining qualities of these attributes were being reassessed.

However, exclusive reliance on Memories or Prose and Verse results in an inadequate and partial biographical outline, as this chapter intends to show. Memories excluded the emotional aspects of his personal relationships and other specific influences on his writing, in carrying out the suggestion of its title by being 'recollections, not at all written as an autobiography'. Indeed, Linton linked all aspects of his personal experience to 'the more remarkable personages whom I have known, and of events in which I have been concerned or with which I have been connected'.⁸ The idea of 'connection' in this justification of method shows how Linton viewed his life as a sequence of experiences given significance by their relation to these personages, and

⁶ John Ruskin, to W. J. L., 20 September 1871, Hay.

⁷ Mrs. Walker, to Kineton Parkes, 1913, tipped in Parkes Biography, Ch. 25 p. 13.

⁸ Memories, p. 206.

the way in which he intended the book to reinforce an image of his career as a nexus of significant political and cultural ‘personages’ and ‘events’. Memories was preceded by several autobiographies by Linton’s contemporaries, notably those by Thomas Cooper and Henry Vizetelly, books which have provided windows for modern readers on to the same cultural and social milieux as those described by Linton, and from virtually the same social level, often with more humour and self-effacement.⁹ George Jacob Holyoake’s slightly later The Warpath of Opinion was a direct response to Linton’s account of him in Memories, and gives some of the closest personal observations on Linton’s personality.¹⁰

Linton portrayed his life in Memories as a movement from active radical to contemplative observer, a pattern that is mirrored by a shift in emphasis from his description of the public discourses in which he participated to his self-sufficient existence as an editor and printer. Arthur Munby’s reception of Memories approved of these exclusions, and the reasons for them: ‘I read the book not only with interest, but with a sincere admiration for [. . .] the apt reticence about things and persons that were better not mentioned at all or mentioned but lightly. I know that others of your friends had the same feeling about the book’.¹¹ Munby was probably thinking of Linton’s long-term separation from his wife Eliza Lynn Linton, who survived him by four years. Indeed, virtually every detail relating to Linton’s three partners Laura Wade, Emily Wade, and Eliza Lynn must be gleaned from personal documents, such as the extensive archives of letters held in specialist libraries. For instance, a detail about Eliza is

⁹ Thomas Cooper, The Life of Thomas Cooper (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874), Henry Vizetelly Glances Back Through Seventy Years: Autobiographical and other Reminiscences 2 vols (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1893). Further references will be given as Cooper and Vizetelly.

¹⁰ The Warpath of Opinion: Strange Things Seen Thereon (Leicester: Leicester Co-operative Printing Society, 1896). Further references will be given as Warpath.

¹¹ Arthur Munby, to W. J. L., 27 May 1896, Beinecke.

telling: in Linton's correction to an encyclopaedia entry on his life, sent for his approval, a sentence about her is crossed out.¹²

The fact that Memories contains only sketchy references to family is not, in itself, exceptional. Social historians tell us that the omission of family life from a public version of personal history was a feature of 'the literary conventions of the genre of working-class autobiographical silence governing the treatment of personal and private life', although Linton's letters to his family show the high regard he had for developing his children's emotional lives.¹³ In contrast, Cooper and Vizetelly in their public statements were far less inhibited about the subject of family. Readers interested in Linton or his work have to look at sources other than Memories for details on the personal or creative elements of his life. However, even taking into account Linton's deliberate separation of different strands of his life into distinct publications, there is a distinct absence of the personal and private in his public self-portrait. There are other elements of his life missing from Memories: despite the centrality of writing and authorship to Linton on personal and public levels, the book gives very little information about the specifics of his authorial roles as a lyric poet, journalist, editor or republican publicist. It seems that he expected Prose and Verse to serve this role.

The biographical material that forms the bulk of this chapter is intended to elicit and explain the themes of creative aspiration and public discourse before they are discussed in relation to particular works from Linton's output. This chapter sets out to explore how creative aspiration and public discourse developed through Linton's career through a detailed biography in which these themes as aspects of his experience, and as subjects in his writing, are emphasised.

¹² National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, proof sheet, Beinecke.

¹³ Owen R. Ashton, W. E. Adams: Chartist, Radical and Journalist 1832-1906 (Whitley Bay: Bewick Press, 1991), p. 13. Also c.f. J. F. C. Harrison, The Early Victorians: 1832-1851 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 73.

The value of Memories for modern readers tends to be for its anecdotes of politics and publishing in the Victorian period, which returns us to Landow's idea of Linton as 'a nexus for many important political, literary, and artistic figures of the nineteenth century'. From the outset, Linton places himself at the centre of a cultural and political network, encouraging the reader to understand his experiences as a nexus of the Victorian period. This pattern is established in the first paragraph of the book, which gives an account of his earliest memory, dating from the family's residence in Stratford. The account is detailed enough for a reader to construct an image of the first memory which is, ironically, sharper than some of the later events in the life. Linton described how, as an eight-year-old on a late January day, he toured a small, enclosed vegetable garden at the back of a suburban villa with his father. They heard the sound of a deep-toned bell from beyond the wall, echoing across the marshy fields spreading out all around. It was London, 1820, and the sound was the outside world; it came from the city. His father, a figure who receives hardly any attention in Linton's writing, knew what the sound meant. Not unique among his acquaintances, but earning the disapproval of his wife, he followed public opinion on state matters through the pamphlets then circulating in booksellers, particularly William Hone's scurrilous The House that Jack Built which he had bought just before Christmas, and the Matrimonial Ladder with its toy cardboard ladder. The only speech Linton recalled from this episode was his father's comment, 'The old King is dead'.

Whether or not this vivid account of the funeral knell of George III really was Linton's earliest recollection, his account of an event with connotations broader than personal recollection leads into a description of personal experiences of aristocratic incompetence and waste in the Regency years. Other details serve to introduce the origins of the republican themes with which Linton's name is most often associated. He described that, at some point in his childhood, a family friend, once a page of the Prince

Regent, took him to the Regent's apartments in Carlton House. Linton later thought that this was 'to teach me some additional reverence for the contemporary royalty' and, with his unfailing sense of the gap between perceived and actual status of monarchy he parenthetically referred to the Regent's unpaid debts, at which point the account dovetails with, and partly explains, his obscure reference to an inheritance of 'some tendency to radicalism' from his father.¹⁴ Linton suggested that this had some connection with Hone and Cruikshank's pamphlets that his father owned, although he probably could not give an objective explanation of the sources of his republican convictions. Cruikshank's lanky figures certainly seem to have influenced the tiny scampering figures that populate Linton's writing for children, and which appear in the verbal iconography of his protest verse in the 1840s. As if to balance the significance of the opening scene Linton ended Memories with a reference to republicanism in a way that reminds the reader of the consistency of his commitment: 'I have not lost that belief, not given up my faith that republicanism has yet to be the universal rule'.¹⁵

The opening scene and closing declaration are acts of self-definition in that they both set the growth of an individual into the context of public events, but there are only sporadic and tantalising reflections by Linton on personal experience in the remainder of the book's two hundred and twenty nine pages. Exceptions are his accounts of certain close friends, and an evocative description of a solitary night spent on Helvellyn.¹⁶ A partial explanation for the absence of this kind of reflection may be that as Linton was recalling and writing his experience in his New England home, he constructed his life into a paradigm of the tensions that ran through the period, the radical-liberal, public-private, activist-contemplative, individual-social pattern that historians now find so useful as an example of the newly empowered Victorian

¹⁴ Memories, p. 17.

¹⁵ Memories, p. 229.

¹⁶ Memories, pp. 134-37.

middling classes. Linton mirrored these tensions in the way he represented his life as a movement from public to private. The fact that Linton saw his personal life as less significant than his perceptions of the political movements that he served as secretary or supporter was consonant with the expectations of Linton's autobiography as the life of an 'old Chartist'. Linton had adopted this approach in James Watson, which received praise from William Bell Scott that was echoed by Munby's comment on Memories.¹⁷ Consequently, but perhaps ironically, both books are now valued primarily for the factual information contained in Linton's artisan observations and reflections on London radicalism and the beginnings and growth of international republicanism. Reading Memories alongside his other retrospective works, one has the feeling that Linton considered his experiences to be a justification for his assumption in maturity as an authoritative witness of urban and political change in the 1830s-40s. Linton realised that he was assuming this role, and claimed in Memories that 'the object of these recollections is not to speak of myself'. This, however, is slightly misleading. The personal origins of his radicalism were very important to him and he gave much information regarding his earliest awareness of reformist politics. For instance, in Linton's description of his experiences as an apprentice in early 1830s London, his awareness of the way in which the new tensions in the urban environment shaped his understanding of the reciprocity of political awareness and educated discourse seems to be part of his younger self rather than a later imposition, and this is borne out by the self-consciousness of his writing in the 1830s.

In relation to the 1830s, Linton described his 'first perversion' to radicalism as contact with an established culture of dissent in the English and European literary traditions, and non-conformist religion rather than through affiliation with a particular political group. In addition, Linton recounted how two close friends in 1832-34

¹⁷ William Bell Scott, to Willie Wade Linton, 4 November 1880, NLA Ms 1698/491.

introduced him to the contemporary ramifications of traditional radicalism; a fellow apprentice and Unitarian, ‘“not a Christian” in the estimation of the pious according to the law’, and a stock-broker’s clerk, ‘worse than Unitarian, an “infidel”’, with whom he read Voltaire’s Philosophical Dictionary during lunch breaks.¹⁸ Descriptions such as these show that Linton identified the atmosphere in the engraving workshops and the reading matter that seemed common currency amongst the apprentice wood engravers as crucial factors in his recognition that literary eloquence as well as radical ideas were valued by the artisan class readership. The direct influence of these experiences is shown in the purpose of Linton’s earliest published pieces in the Monthly Repository and his poem ‘The Incendiary’s Grave’, which are discussed in Chapter Two.

Other accounts of the workshop environment, notably Linton’s near-contemporary and fellow wood-engraver under Bonner, Henry Vizetelly, told light-heartedly how ‘forbidden books, furtively obtained, were eagerly read out by us out of hours and freely discussed while the work was going on’.¹⁹ If Vizetelly’s account is representative, a ‘politicised’ awareness of literature in the workshop community was not exceptional: ‘We did not read Shelley as he is now read, for his poetic imagery and mellifluous diction, but because this ostracised poem of his teemed with agnostic and republican ideas boldly expressed in impassioned language’.²⁰ Shelley was a common starting point in liberal and radical discussion, but Vizetelly, with his telling terms ‘forbidden’ and ‘impassioned’, suggests the eagerness with which young people have always sought out much talked about printed matter disapproved of by established authority. Vizetelly’s book often mentions the same personalities and events as Linton, but with a sense of humour and self-deprecation. In contrast to Vizetelly’s description

¹⁸ Memories, pp. 17-18. Linton’s ‘infidel’ is anonymous. He emigrated to Australia. This was possibly Ebenezer Jones’s brother Sumner, who later wrote letters to Linton on Bank of Australia headed note paper, Beinecke.

¹⁹ Vizetelly, 1, 121.

²⁰ Vizetelly, 1, 121.

of Watson's shop as a picture of confusion and burlesque, Linton wrote more earnestly of the 'proscribed' material Watson supplied to working class readers, and the constant threat of arrest for doing so.

Like Vizetelly, Linton's experience of London was inclusive, taking in the tensions between the traditional oppositions of radicalism: established church and dissenters, priest craft and free enquiry, natural right and traditional authority. The newer features of the developing urban environment appear in Linton's account, such as Richard Carlile's shop at the time of his apprenticeship as an illustrative emblem of how these elements were construed by the radical community: 'in an upper window, stood two life-sized figures – "the Devil and a Bishop," cheek by jowl, scandalising the pious passers-by'.²¹

Linton's references to his formative years in Bonner's workshop allude to direct experience of the prejudicial treatment suffered by members of dissenting faiths such as Unitarianism. He firmly set these experiences within the rational and educated agitation surrounding the aftermath of the 1832 elections, led by the discriminating articulacy of James Bronterre O'Brien's articles on liberty and history in Henry Hetherington's Poor Man's Guardian. The legislative treatment of non-conformists, Chartists, and those active in the campaign for an unstamped press were for Linton in 1832 the visible evidence of institutionalised victimisation and religious intolerance. Linton's writing in the late 1830s shows that his apprehension of the literary exploration of individual liberty in Milton's prose and Shelley's poetry was confirmed by his experiences in and around London. Linton's interpretation of his experience in the city seemed to confirm partial or class legislation as a reality.

The radicalism of the engraving workshops had a bearing on the young Linton's prejudices, but what seems to have been more important was the independence that he

²¹ Memories, p. 13.

enjoyed as a journeyman wood-engraver.²² The skilled journeyman engraver could work independently in a small space with little capital outlay and few tools. Affiliation with an established workshop more or less guaranteed the security of regular employment and a free flow of work. The increasing demand in the early 1840s for book and newspaper illustrations, and his technical accomplishment, guaranteed that Linton could always rely on his skill to provide a more than adequate income. He did experience some financial difficulties for short periods throughout his long working life, but on the whole his chosen craft allowed him to operate independently from long-term financial patronage.

Between 1833 and 1838 Linton's public and private relationships combined to reinforce his disposition towards a synthesis of plebeian and liberal ideas of reform in the style, content and mode of publication of his writing. In the retrospective view of Memories Linton seems to occupy an uncertain position on the role of personal relationships in public causes. Even though Linton admitted in Memories that his personal relationships in these years contributed to his choice of causes, triangulation with other sources is crucial in constructing a reasonably complete image of his motivations at this time. From 1833 William was a visitor to the Wades, family friends who moved to Upper Berkeley Street in 1835, thence to Great Quebec Street, Montague Square in 1837 where they held Sunday receptions. Thomas Wade had been editor of Bell's New Weekly Messenger, and was member of William Johnson Fox's social circle. Wade was also an aspiring poet, and an extract from his Mundi et Cordis: de rebus sempiternis et temporariis Carmina (1835), shows the kind of loose expression blended with a liberal perception of progress that influenced Linton's earliest publications:

²² Memories, p. 69.

The bonds of spirit are asunder broken,
 And matter makes a very sport of distance;
 On every side appears a silent token
 Of what will be hereafter, when Existence
 Shall even become a pure and equal thing,
 And earth sweep high as heaven, on solemn wing. (ll. 9-14)

Another influential point of contact on Linton's earliest publications was R. H. Horne, later to be the confidante of Elizabeth Barrett. He is now known primarily for a perceptive early appreciation of Tennyson, and for the mock-epic Orion, provocatively sold at one farthing. Forty years later Linton was Horne's principal support in London.²³ The cosiness of Horne's editorial conduct of the Monthly Repository is shown in his practice of showing reviews of works to their authors before publication in the periodical.²⁴ The Monthly Repository, where Linton's verse was first published, has been recognised as an important forum for liberal ideas.²⁵ Throughout 1836-37, the periodical was concerned with poetry as a vehicle for reform, with particular reference to Wordsworth. From the outset, Linton's verse was linked to the expression of liberty through poetry as an ideal of creative aspiration in combination with public duty.

The Fox and Wade friendships brought Linton into a close circle of free-thinking intellectuals and exposed him to outlooks on radicalism other than those which he had encountered through companions in the workshop. The accomplishments of the women in Wade's circle, particularly Eliza and Sarah Flower, exerted a particularly long-lasting effect on him. Like Horne and W. J. Fox, they combined learning, creativity and earnest commitment to social progress: 'their friendship, a love as of two elder sisters [. . .] was indeed a liberal education. With their love and feeling for music

²³ Memories, p. 22. Linton/Horne correspondence, Beinecke.

²⁴ Horne, to Leigh Hunt, BL Add. Ms. 38109 f. 210.

²⁵ Armstrong, pp. 112-135.

and pictorial art, and their high poetic thought'.²⁶ During this time, Linton painted portraits of Thomas Wade's mother and his sister Laura. The paintings are on a small scale, rapidly executed and showing free handling of the paint. But the drawing and the medallion-like composition suggest uncertainty in the mode of presentation as to whether they are formal portraits or intimate sketches.²⁷ Another portrait of a young girl displays a high degree of mastery over facial expression on a small scale, indicating that his performances in portraiture were inconsistent in strength. Linton's artisan training as a craftsman rather than an artist meant that his graphic skills were finely honed instruments of reproduction rather than as a means of personal expression. While he thought and spoke of himself, with justification, as an artist in the craft, the demands of the profession entailed little time for original artistic creativity. Furthermore, he had no schooling in anatomy, and this is evident in his figure work. However, from the perspective of social independence and aspiration it is significant that a young wood engraver was trying his hand at oil portraits. They must have been intended to impress the Wade family and their social set with his innate skill and accomplishment, and he asserted his status in his visiting card from this time which concealed his artisan status: 'Mr. W. J. Linton Portrait Painter'.²⁸

There were indications in William James' courtship of Thomas Wade's sister Laura in 1835-36, and their marriage in October 1837, that both families lacked enthusiasm for the match, and his increasingly distant relationship with his parents may have been the motivating factor for the sheer energy he channelled into his writing in the early 1840s.²⁹ Laura died of consumption in April 1838. For the rest of his life Linton never mentioned his first love by name, but this experience of loss emerges in his poetry and eventually became a leitmotif in his later work. Shortly after Laura's

²⁶ *Memories*, p. 25

²⁷ With a folder of Walter Crane's studies made during his apprenticeship with Linton, Beinecke.

²⁸ Beinecke.

²⁹ Mary Linton, to W. J. L., 17 October 1837, NLA Ms 1698/7.

death, between 1838 and 1839, Linton and Laura's sister Emily chose to cohabit. By 1839 Linton and Emily were responsible for a child of their own. Emily, who was one year older than Linton, became his partner and Common-Law wife until her death in 1856.³⁰

Linton's attendance at William Johnson Fox's South Place Chapel services in Finsbury during the mid 1830s is a further indication of his eclectic experience, in which political radicalism was identified with dissenting faiths in the project of reform. Later writers have commented on the convergence of ideas and social classes in the South Place congregation.³¹ Linton's admiration of Fox was one of many productive relationships with non-conformist ministers which confirmed for him the importance of dissent to his personal understanding of reformism. Memories emphasises Fox's presence. Ostracised by the Unitarian Church Fox had left his wife in 1834 with their deaf-mute son to live with Eliza Flower. Fox's oratory still held the loyalty of the South Place congregation and appealed to different layers of urban society. The way Fox conducted South Place Chapel influenced the composition of the congregation. Vizetelly's comment that Fox's lectures 'might, in a less expanded form, have served as leading articles in the radical "True Sun" ' is a sign of how radicals close to the liberal patterns of protest recognised that the claims of progressive dissent dovetailed with reform.³² South Place continued to contain 'the most critical congregation in London' until the late nineteenth century.³³ The nobility of the common folk was a recurrent feature in Fox's lectures: 'Is not humanity beautiful, even in its roughest outline-In the sturdy peasant-the sturdy peasant, who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, and who thrives upon the bread he earns and eats; who walks erect as man, feeling no

³⁰ Family dates, NLA Ms 1698/336.

³¹ Radical Artisan, p. 12, Margot Finn, After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848-1874 (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 163. Further references will be given as Finn.

³² Vizetelly, 1, p. 97.

³³ Warpath, p. 9.

dependence on others any more than they on him, and thus working and winning his toilsome way?’³⁴ Linton transferred this terminology into his vision of the common folk and their traditions as a vital political force.

As well as his developing relationships with the Wades and attending South Place chapel in Finsbury, Linton became a ‘frequent and free’ visitor in 1837 at Fox’s house in rural Bayswater, and remained part of Fox’s circle until 1844.³⁵ It was a kind of cultural haven for otherwise displaced figures. Like other middle class homes, the house was a type of tolerant society where, in an attempt to unify abstract humanitarianism with concrete reform, Bentham and Shelley were equally celebrated as ‘household gods’. The group included Douglas Jerrold, the humorist and writer, Southwood Smith, Unitarian convert and the physician who embalmed Bentham, Mary Gillies the miniature painter, Eliza and Sarah Flower, readers and followers of Mary Wollstonecraft. They played music and acted plays, and while the conversational context was stimulating and challenging, and ‘all visitors were expected to discuss poetry and Utilitarian reform in the same breath’.³⁶ Linton, by his own account, was a witness rather than a participant.³⁷ He was constantly listening, working out his own responses to the possible relationships between his artisan occupation and political interests, and the individual creative accomplishments of the group, particularly Fox, who combined a literary outlook with commitment to public discourse. Linton reprinted material by virtually all members of the group in his first periodical, the National, showing how he attempted to bridge liberal utilitarianism with his own notions of artisan self-improvement. These visits to Fox contributed to Linton’s idea of

³⁴ Reports of Lectures Delivered at the Chapel in South Place, Finsbury by W. J. Fox, No II, Aristocratical and Political Morality (London: Charles Fox, 1835), p. 33. The 1838 edition was reviewed by Linton in the National.

³⁵ Memories, p. 172.

³⁶ Ann Blainey, The Farthing Poet: A Lesser Literary Lion (London: Longmans, 1968), p. 61. Further references will be given as Blainey.

³⁷ Memories, p. 24.

creative activity, such as writing poetry, as a defining element in social duty, influencing the shape of his earliest writing.

Linton's account of the Fox circle in Memories leads him directly into a discussion of the private experience of literature: 'I owed very much to the influence of Fox. Before I knew him personally, hearing lectures by him, and reading Shelley's Queen Mab and Lamennais' Words of a Believer, had stirred within me the passion of Reform'.³⁸ This in turn shifts into his recollections of early conversations with Watson, which 'began my first acquaintance with Chartism'.³⁹ Personal relationships, his 'liberal education' at Fox's home, public protest, the tradition of poetry as the expression of universal truth, are presented as a seamless sequence. For radicals and liberals in the 1830s, and Chartists later in the decade, the transmission of literary works in the form of a tradition was evidence of the history of liberty through time. An enduring curiosity about the nature of this tradition cut across existing class boundaries, leading to the fact that radical, liberal and conservative concepts of the literary tradition shared many literary works as touchstones of value. Further artisan class interest in the literary heritage in relation to reform was created by liberal intellectuals like Fox who was concerned with the kind of resonance literary works were producing in the autodidactic audience.⁴⁰ The theme of poetry as a vehicle for moral truth was frequently related to the office of poetry in modern society. William Howitt, one of Linton's models, had written in 1835 that 'all truth is democratic. It matters not what all poets may be in their individual practice or position; they are compelled by the invincible power of truth [. . .] to write so as to become foster-fathers of liberty'.⁴¹ Howitt went on to describe Wordsworth as the modern representative of the enduring spirit of liberty, a claim that Linton would dispute in his early poems.

³⁸ Memories, p. 26.

³⁹ Memories, p. 27.

⁴⁰ Maidment, p. 281-89.

⁴¹ Tait's Magazine (March 1835), quoted in People's Journal, 1 (1846), p. 44.

The experience of literary works for Linton formed a valuable stage in his development of a critical framework for his later concepts of community, and at an early point in his writing career he sought to externalise a process that he recognised he shared with many artisans. However, rather than seeking to establish an alternative literary canon, Linton supported the idea that established literary works reflected the writer's representation of liberty as a combination of political awareness and art. The existence of a canon of literary works concerned with or articulating ideas of liberty allowed an introvert like Linton to enjoy the private aesthetic aspects of the reading experience while feeling linked to political change through a community of readers and shared sets of values.

The personal experience of reading for Linton was implicitly linked with oratory and reform. Milton's prose or Shakespeare's drama offered a historical perspective on the modern project of institutional reform by showing that personal and political liberty were central themes of established culture.⁴² The intellectual tenor of the Fox-Wade households conditioned Linton's self-fashioning as an advocate of humanitarian reform. He admired the educated style of discourse in the Wade and Fox households, and acquired confidence and a sense of purpose from them. Ann Blainey's vivid description of the group in her biography of Horne emphasises the group's cultural features, such as their intellectual preoccupations, rather than social rank, although Smith is right in pointing out the element of social aspiration in Linton's involvement with the group.⁴³ As a writer from artisan origins, with a strong interest in creativity and individualism, Linton was impressed by the potential for liberalism to absorb and be modified by its confluence with artisan class elements. The converse was also true but perceived by Linton as a positive reciprocation.

⁴² Albert K Stevens, 'Milton and Chartism', *Philological Quarterly*, 12 (1933), 377-88.

⁴³ Blainey, Ch. 6, *Radical Artisan*, pp. 13-14.

Linton's membership of the London Working Men's Association (LWMA) brought him into the idea of articulate protest as a shared activity enacted in a public space. Flirting with acceptable levels of personal risk seemed to have been one of his propensities as a young adult. For instance, despite the limitations imposed on him by his indentures in 1832 Linton had worn the badge of the National Association of the Working Classes, a fact that he mentioned in Memories as if to lay claim to involvement in the birth of moderate Chartism. As a member of the respectable artisan class, Linton was one of those who hoped to benefit most from a meritocratic society. The idea of meritocracy was finding realisation in the reformist politics within which Linton first cast his youthful enthusiasm for liberty. In Memories Linton connects his account of Chartism as a feature of life in 1830s London with his most resilient friend, James Watson. The friendship began in 1835. When Linton walked from his lodgings in the Lower Road, Islington, to the engraving shop in the city he passed Watson's shop on the City Road, Finsbury. He often went in to buy the cheap, and sometimes illegal, reprints of freethinking literature in pamphlet form, and lingered to discuss them with Watson and his wife. Watson had been at the centre of the campaign to remove stamp duty from newspapers with the aim of giving wider access to current political information. Through him Linton met William Lovett, Henry Hetherington, Abel Heywood, and Richard Moore, the group of moderate Chartists known as the Finsbury radicals. As Linton's friend and publisher, Watson was a life-long support. In Memories and the 1879 biography of Watson, Linton represented the publisher as a key figure in the transition from popular radicalism into Chartism during a period of innovation in publishing where the printers are represented as heroes for universal rights in their distribution and support of multi lateral reading. In Linton's view, Watson's printing activity was a prelude to social improvement through the enlightenment of the common reader along the lines suggested by the Owenite appropriations of Paine and

Godwin in the New Moral World. But Linton could be precise when dealing with the specific and pragmatic ramifications of a meritocratic perspective, such as his views on inherited authority. In his description of Watson, Linton combined elements that he made part of his open approach: 'Though he kept a bookseller's shop, he was in no sense a tradesman- a buyer and seller merely for gain'.⁴⁴ Vizetelly's irreverent account of Watson gives us a different view that Linton probably sought to modify.

Personally close to Watson and Hetherington, Linton had direct insight into the organisational aspects of moderate Chartism, a position which was at once stimulating and dangerous. Memories describes 1838-39 as the apex of Chartism, when the 'People's Charter' seemed to develop out of Hetherington's organisation of the National Union of the Working Classes (NUWC), a group Linton described as the 'peaceful and open expression of public opinion', and the predecessor of the London Working Men's Association which drew up the 1838 Charter. This document was 'accepted' at a meeting of 'influential citizens' where Linton, once again describing himself as an observer, heard Ebenezer Elliott speak.⁴⁵ In these parts of Memories Linton recounted the liberal forms of public discourse: the public meeting and the printed discussion in pamphlets, periodicals and newspapers as models for working-class agitation.⁴⁶ Yet Chartism, as Linton experienced it, was essentially retrospective, growing out of the campaign against the stamp duty, which was in turn influenced by middle class radicalism and Enlightenment rationalism.

Concurrently, Linton's participation in the London Working Men's Association provided him with evidence of the potential creative possibilities being realised by articulate artisans and craftsmen at public meetings and in structured debate which encouraged participants to construct arguments within a rationalist framework. The

⁴⁴ Memories, p. 38.

⁴⁵ Memories, p. 34.

⁴⁶ Memories, Ch. 5.

term 'creative' is particularly apposite in this context. As E. P. Thompson pointed out, articulacy as a reflection of self-awareness was often extended into written discourse. Thompson reminds us that this discourse drew from a pre-existing concept of the self, the 'free born Englishman'.⁴⁷ This overarching ideal of personal liberty, which assumed different forms depending on the composition of the group, was kept alive in the 1830s by radical agitation across the social spectrum. In the context of radicalism in the early 1830s historians agree that class as a term has limited relevance in a description of Victorian society. Linton always used the orthodox terms 'working classes' or 'rank'. However, David Goodway's study of London radicalism offers an alternative analysis to the idea that articulate artisans who have left written accounts were exceptional in their understanding of change. Goodway concludes that 'there can be little doubt that the second quarter of the century saw the making of a metropolitan proletariat', leading to his proposition that 'working class' is a viable term to describe the awareness by a significant part of the early Victorian labouring population of the shift from artisan independence to the wage economy typical of a proletariat-capitalist relationship.⁴⁸ According to Goodway's account, in 1840s London 'slop production and capitalism are impossible to separate, for in a handicraft economy their logic is identical. In relentless combination they moulded the working-class politics and trade unionism of the thirties and forties by the proletarianization of the metropolitan craftsmen'. Artisan attempts to regain social independence led to collective experiments such as co-operatives, and this was the point which Linton gave as the start of his writing career in Prose and Verse with an essay 'Co-operation', dated 1836.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The Making of the English Working Class (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968). Further references will be given as Thompson.

⁴⁸ David Goodway, London Chartism 1838-1848 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 8-9.

⁴⁹ P and V, vol. 1.

In the language of the NUWC, Owenite Socialism and Chartism, Linton found an established idiom through which the experiences of an urban community undergoing a shift in political awareness could be expressed. His use of this idiom is often highly individual and discriminating, for instance his adoption in verse of the figure of slavery as a way of understanding labour relations. The way in which Linton translated the master-slave trope into a multi level form of generating appeal among a wide readership is explored in Chapter Two. In Linton's case, he seemed to have been more articulate and compelling in writing than in speech. However, there were instances where his public discourse had a direct effect on an audience. Holyoake recalled one example when, in the distinguished company of George Dawson and William Shaen on the public platform, Linton gave an inspirational address on European patriotism.⁵⁰ However, in writing he could develop and align his learning and ideas of culture, independently developed, with concepts of liberty and identity prevalent in both plebeian movements such as Chartism and in the patterns of liberal discourse, for example Wordsworth's sonnets and Carlyle's essays.

Implicit to Linton's earliest writing is the idea of creating a relationship with the readership, in which poetry had an established tradition of commenting authoritatively on the present. The different roles of editor, pamphleteer, poet, and representative of 'the people' were all contained in the National, where Linton articulated the traditional radical themes: the native preoccupations with agricultural custom, which he presented as a set of contrasts to the Poor Laws, and as a starting point for his own versions of utopian pastoral in the 1840s. Linton's critique of inherited authority and established state religion was fed by different contemporary streams; Owenite socialism, the language of parliamentary reform, liberal utilitarianism, and the rationalism current in plebeian radicalism since the 1790s. Close to the intentions of the unstamped, Linton's

⁵⁰ Warpath, p. 74.

use of his material in the National transferred this sense of a relationship between tradition and individual engagement into the concrete form of a periodical. In the process, this first large scale work created a model of cultural heritage as diverse, sometimes dissonant, individual voices united by their concern with liberty as a dynamically renewed element of culture. The periodical embodied Linton's idea of community which he developed through the 1840s, and was given full exposition eleven years later in the English Republic.

The form and editorial practice of nearly all the radical periodicals in the 1830s encouraged reader participation in the sense that the periodical was a type of forum responsive to and inclusive of the specific needs of readers in creating a 'house of rumours'. This aspect of the radical press of the 1830s remains an interesting feature for its anticipation of a multilateral popular press in the twentieth century.⁵¹ All publications on the radical spectrum operated on the principle of free enquiry or discussion, conducted in letters pages, readers' verse, or in the dialogue between articles in a manner that drew its influences from such diverse sources as the Chartist meeting and Quakerism. Chapter Two discusses how Linton creates a sense of reader participation in the National.

When Linton later gave the National as his first publication he described it as a 'cheap library for the people'.⁵² By placing the National at the start of his writing career Linton presented his early and late concepts of culture and of 'the people' as coterminous, satisfying his concern in the mid 1890s to present a consistent image of his cultural commitments. However, Linton's retrospective view in Memories did agree with his intentions for the periodical at the time of its production rather than being biographical revision.

⁵¹ Michael Scrivener, Poetry and Reform: Periodical Verse from the English Democratic Press 1792-1824 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), pp. 23-26. Paul Thomas Murphy, Toward a Working Class Canon (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1994).

⁵² Memories, p. 76, James Watson.

By 1839 Linton had established the main outlines of his journalistic persona. Published writing was also a way of creating a discursive space within contemporary culture. Much of Linton's writing sought to find common ground between different concepts of reform, and this is shown in the fact that he always used architectural analogies whenever he explained himself at length. Subsequent writing over the next ten years refined the terms of his discourse. His style was characterised by the configuration of influences that reinforced self-determination, personal duty, the value of skill, and a kind of structured mutual aid as a defining quality of civilized culture. At the centre of his language was the value of individualism and its corollary notion of public duty in the shaping of political and social rights. For the respectable radicals this value had been undermined by the historical development of parliamentary politics and partial legislation. Between writing 'Co-operation' and copy for the National, Linton was continuing to prepare for his contributions to the reform programme. His parents, however, were unhappy with the direction his talents were taking him, and Linton's daughter later told of the rifts created within the family by his interest in political reform and republicanism. Linton's eldest daughter wrote: 'My father had suffered much in early days, from narrow-minded and bigoted relatives, who cast him off when he espoused the Republican cause in England and broke away from the dogmas of the Established Church'.⁵³ Thomas Wade, Linton's brother-in-law, advised him to give up his ambitions toward unprofitable projects like the National.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Linton had difficulties managing his finances and, despite the considerable income he always commanded through his engraving, anxiety about debt was a recurrent element of his experience. Public attitudes to Linton's relationship with the sister of his deceased wife probably did not help in his confidence with personal relationships.

⁵³ Margaret Linton Mather, to Kineton Parkes, 22 Feb 1914, V and A MSL/1938/2943/49.

⁵⁴ Thomas Wade, to W. J. L., May 5 1839, Feltrinelli 4/49.

While Linton was producing the National the People's Charter, with a petition of over a million signatures, found its way to Parliamentary rejection in July 1839.⁵⁵ For Linton and his moderate colleagues this was a disappointment: the Charter represented a rational and immediate means of realising Paine's conceptual understanding of an individual's fundamental rights. Linton's brief references to his own contributions to the culture of Chartist-related radicalism, for example his translation of Paine's Address on the Abolition of Royalty, are always mentioned in relation to social context rather than individual achievement or recognition, although the anonymous printing of this and other works may have been to guard against prosecution: even as late as 1879 an article on Linton's life and poetry was refused by the editor of the London Quarterly because 'a memoir of the author of the Life of Paine would hardly be suitable for [the] readers'.⁵⁶ Linton's 1840 Life of Thomas Paine was his only published work to remain continuously in print throughout his life. One of the aspects of this point in his career that drew particular interest from literary historians in the 1870s was Linton's role in the publication history of Shelley, in which Linton continued the trend running through the 1830s of making Shelley the site of ideological dispute.⁵⁷ Linton was central in providing Watson in 1840 with a copy of 'The Masque of Anarchy', taken from Leigh Hunt's manuscript of the poem. Watson's edition sold for three pence, thus making the work available to a wide audience.⁵⁸

Linton called the 1840s his 'busy years': he occupied different public and private roles in this decade, which marked his passage through heterogeneous social contexts. The variety of Linton's roles in the early 1840s is partly implicit in the reconfiguration of publishing and authorship in early Victorian society. Memories concentrates on public discourse, particularly journalism as a way of spreading

⁵⁵ Memories, Ch. 5.

⁵⁶ Memories, p. 71. Ms verse Beinecke.

⁵⁷ Memories, Ch. 11.

⁵⁸ W. J. L., to H. Buxton Forman, 11 October 1878, Beinecke.

republican ideas, as a continued commitment to the cultivation of the existing Chartist readership. This period was an important phase in the development of journalism and a mass readership. Linton's journalistic entries in this decade combined political motivations and a literary sensibility. He consciously differentiated his vision of society from the specific and immediate aims of Chartism. An example of this independence of approach was his 1840 translation of Lamennais' Modern Slavery, a writer whose work strengthened the direction of Linton's convictions. Linton added an appendix to his translation that drew Shelley into broader political aims: 'Understand then, that your slavery, your misery, and all its spawn of sufferings and unheard-of agonies, will be eternal, unless in the first place you shall free yourselves politically'.⁵⁹ Liberal educated literary culture was for Linton a means of reinforcing a sense that nationality inhered within the people. The role of Chartism in the changing society was to offer not only a political code but to act as a pattern for living and writing. From 1841 Mazzini's concept of nationality was the primary influence on Linton's writing. Mazzini had been living in London since 1837. Linton at this point shared many of Mazzini's ideas. Central to Mazzini's vision of the relationship between different nation states was the figure of nations analogous to individuals within a community. The individual nation state, in Mazzini's model was only a provisional identity to be superseded by a union of European republics.

In Memories Linton later reinforced a reading of his early journalism as a reflection of artisans who, like himself, articulated independent attitudes within the framework of Chartism. For instance, he related his editorship of the Odd Fellow to the oppositional culture of the 1830s, particularly to Hetherington as a central publisher within the Chartist community: 'Hetherington was a leader of men [. . .] As a printer, publisher, and news - agent, he might have become a rich man, but his time was only

⁵⁹ Modern Slavery (London, 1840), p. 21.

ungrudgingly given to the public service, which he would not neglect even when his attention to it might be at the risk of his own business [. . .] Popular among the better portion of the Chartist party, not unpopular even with those to whose policy and conduct he was opposed'.⁶⁰ In such evaluative comments Linton signalled both his sympathy and distance from the main body of Chartist rhetoric and opinion, thus reinforcing the image he wished to project of a sympathetic participant in Chartist activity who maintained an independent prerogative. According to Prose and Verse his creative participation in Hetherington's Odd Fellow began in 1839 with a series of political lyrics called 'Hymns' (signed 'Spartacus'). The term of his editorship, April 1841-August 1842, saw a critical year for Chartist activity, and opened up a context for his argumentative exploration of contemporary culture.

Diversity of social contact characterises Linton's experiences in the 1840s. The engraving business in Hatton Garden thrived and this led to a phase of relative prosperity and success.⁶¹ The firm of Smith and Linton benefited from the newly established Illustrated London News, for which they engraved the prestigious illustrations to reports on major London exhibitions. Other high profile contracts included the Abbotsford edition of Scott. But the business was fraught by bad luck. A good example of this was the 1842 Book of British Ballads, a fascinating and unusual book with a list of contributors that reads like a roll-call of early Victorian illustrators. Despite its high quality as a book and its range as an anthology, financial success fell short of expectations, and this was transmitted to Smith and Linton. However, with a reasonably secure income, Linton was rapidly developing a reputation as one of the most skilful engravers in the city. Even the unpredictable George Cruikshank referred to his 'masterful hands'.⁶² The security of a steady income enabled writing, and his

⁶⁰ Memories, Ch. 5.

⁶¹ Landlord (?), note to W. J. L April 1844 giving annual rent of Woodford £30. Feltrinelli 5/31

⁶² George Cruikshank, to W. J. L. 7 October 1847, Feltrinelli 2/33

connections with Mazzini gave shape to his political programme. In addition he became a father responsible not only for his own family but for Orrin Smith's after his death in 1843. Memories hints at the difficulties he had in reconciling the amount of time he expended on his political interests with the needs of his clients in the engraving business. However, these were important years for his contacts with the artistic community. Through the Institute of Fine Arts, which he joined in 1846, the year of its foundation, he formed friendships with Alfred Stevens, Godfrey Sykes and Edward Wehnert.⁶³ He had met the landscapist Edward Duncan while working on his first journeyman commission. The two collaborated on a series of large scale engravings for the Illustrated London News.⁶⁴ It is telling that in Memories he champions artists or writers whose work and reputations seemed to resist rehabilitation. Like Linton, most of them are now almost forgotten, such as Charles Wells, the subject of a Keats sonnet, Thomas Sibson, a painter and early Dickens illustrator, William Bell Scott's brother David, who studied with Kaulbach, and Ebenezer Jones, who was later to receive attention from Theodore Watts-Dunton and the Rossettis.⁶⁵ William Bell Scott and Alfred Stevens were close friends whose work has maintained lasting interest and appeal through the twentieth century. Despite his mainstream connections and respectable occupation within the publishing community, Linton's public advocacy of Chartist objectives and formation of a mutual education society meant that the nice social distinctions made by his neighbours effectively made him a pariah on the Woodford bus on his commute into the city.⁶⁶ The extended account of the Graham letter opening episode, discussed in detail by Smith, is given by Linton in Memories is an example of the self-image he wanted to transmit to posterity.⁶⁷

⁶³ Memories, p. 73.

⁶⁴ Memories, Ch. 8.

⁶⁵ Henry Stephens Salt, to W. J. L., 28 January 1892, 4 March 1892, Beinecke.

⁶⁶ Memories, pp. 75-76.

⁶⁷ Memories, pp. 52-53, Radical Artisan, pp. 54-59, Douglas Jerrold, to W. J. L. [nd], NLA Ms 1698/510.

In his management of the Illuminated Magazine during 1845 Linton developed as an editor. His job allowed him to visit Paris where he visited the Louvre.⁶⁸ His most important contribution to the journal was a doggerel poem 'Bob Thin', and its sequel 'The Poor-House Fugitive'. Linton planned and partially executed a related work, a history of England with his close friend and painter Thomas Sibson. They fashioned English history into a sequence of dispossessions although, as one Victorian historian pointed out, historical analysis was not Linton's strength.⁶⁹ Linton derived his way of reading history from other radical authors, particularly Paine and Cobbett, indicating the flawed notion of history that lay at the heart of the early Victorian radical concept of how the past informed the present.

There were moments of escape among the political activity and journalistic ventures, such as visits to Wales with Thomas Sibson, and to Cumbria with his city clerk friend and poet Ebenezer Jones.⁷⁰ The Cumbrian landscape lived on in his personal imagery as a symbol of his moments of Wordsworthian communion with nature.⁷¹

As secretary of Mazzini's People's International league 1847 and 1848 were particularly active years for Linton. He represented himself as 'continually a speaker' for international republicanism.⁷² Linton had developed the idea of modifying the readership's perception of its assumptions on European events while secretary for the People's International League, which aimed primarily 'to enlighten the British public as to the political condition and relations of foreign countries'. This is underlined in Linton's later evaluation of the League's successes:

⁶⁸ W.J.L., to Emily, 8 Wednesday [no month] 1845, Feltrinelli 1/3.

⁶⁹ Memories, pp. 67-68, Sibson obituary, Beinecke. Review of The English Republic: A Selection ed. by W. J. Linton (London: Sonnenschein, 1891), English Historical Review 7 (1892), 800-802.

⁷⁰ Memories, p. 73, 79, NLA Ms 1698/322

⁷¹ Memories, pp. 133-37.

⁷² Memories, p. 77.

How necessary such an association was simply as a means of public enlightenment may be understood when even the *Spectator*, the highest priced and most thoughtful newspaper at that time in England, a paper which had as contributors such men as Carlyle, Stuart Mill, Bridges Adams, and Colonel Thompson, depended altogether for foreign information on the *Journal des Debats*, whose columns were closed to all popular movements in Europe.⁷³

Linton stressed the importance of accurate foreign news to republican aims during 1848. Through Mazzini he had found a 'happier philosophy of political reform [. . .] It is creative. It assimilates rights with duties, and answers, upon new premises, most of the potent objections of conservatives'.⁷⁴ His intention from the late 1840s to the mid 50s was to infuse this 'creative' republicanism into the politically conscious readership to successfully inspire peaceful English revolution. This influenced his writing for his newspaper The Cause of the People in which Linton wrote about the unreliability of the London press on continental news, 'upon foreign affairs as upon our own, our editors are, doubtless, much misinformed [. . .] they continually invent and wilfully mislead, for the sake of evil ends [. . .] the shameful inventions with reference to the expulsion of English workmen [. . .] the absurd rumour of 'George Sand' distributing pistols to the mob'.⁷⁵

The poetic themes in 1848 reflect not only this kind of involvement with the public discourse on the revolutionary events in Europe, but form an interesting record of his reflection on them as a perceptive and thoughtful observer. However, Linton found a kind of temporary compromise through writing poetry in which he attempted to read the present in terms of narrative tradition. The formal characteristics of the poetry give it a sense of distance from the events of 1848. For instance, his verse account of the Irish famine in the 'Rhymes and Reasons Against Landlordism', in 1849 was a contemplative meditation on the events, and the 'Dirge of Nations', written in

⁷³ *Memories*, p. 98.

⁷⁴ Linton and Holyoake, *Reasoner*, 3 May 1848, p. 319.

⁷⁵ 10 June 1848, *P and V*, vol. 8, p. 32.

November 1848, attempted a kind of consolation through the stylised representation of revolution.

In contrast to the professional growth in the early to mid 1840s, May 1849 found Linton earning a precarious living in Miteside, a large house near Ravenglass in Lancashire to which he had moved with his family. He recorded the journey and arrival to Miteside in a small sketchbook which served as domestic inventory and notebook, a true sign of necessary thrift.⁷⁶ The drawings, pencil sketches of clouds and mountains, devoid of figures, speak of a sense of seclusion and inwardness. Through the late 1830s and 1840s Linton had taken the creative effects of reading as given, and that writing formed a productive relationship with an audience, or could even create an audience. There are indications in the sketchbook of Linton's doubts about the potential for this dynamic to offer anything of value, hinted at forty years later in Memories. For someone who relied on the inseparability of reading and enlightenment these doubts formed a watershed insight. The sketchbook entries demonstrate that his uncertainty about the writer-audience relationship in the context of republicanism began around January 1849, in the winter months directly after the major failures of oppositional activity in London Chartism, the provisional Government in Paris, and Mazzini's Roman Republic. Linton began to intersperse landscape drawings and publication plans with private meditations that circled around the personal ramifications of authorship and, in the process, attempted to define the potential for individual creativity in the remaining journalists, writers and readers sympathetic to republican objectives. The underlying tensions between the public and private writer are played out in meditations which range from the characteristically affirmatory to the curiously uncertain: 'I would rather die a felon for uttering some social or religious truth, to one or some of my fellows, my artist aspirations all hindered- than live to accomplish my highest wishes at

⁷⁶ Ms, Beinecke.

the cost of selfish desertion of the right at the expense of my cowardly or 'polite' deferral of the duty of truthful utterance'. This first sentence establishes and determines the whole series of oppositions and tensions throughout the entries: personal aspirations and duty; 'polite' achievement and truthful utterance, each displaced at the expense of the other. Even in these private remarks Linton is concerned with a potential, but unspecified, readership and the 'utterance of truth' which might hinder personal gain but would contribute to the process and understanding of change. The denial of polite self-advancement requires the direction of creativity into the republican cause. Another confessional reflection begins despondently. The heart of his work, Linton told himself, had been 'literary efforts and political action' which he viewed as a personal calling rather than a profession:

For ten years past Art has been to me only a delight, an occasional pleasure-For my daily work (in which my soul was not) was not Art, though called so. The real travail of my soul has been in the cause of the People-in my literary efforts and political action [. . .] the bent of a man's life is told by his work, not by his delights, nor his recreations, by the work of his innermost nature. It is the difference between vocation and aspiration.

Deferral of self-advancement in favour of an uncompromisingly 'truthful utterance' entails the setting aside of graphic craft in favour of journalism linked to a political programme. Linton was reflecting on the gap between vocation, or public discourse, and personal fulfilment. By creating an opposition between 'vocation and aspiration', or effective action and art, Linton rationalised his position of patience in defeat as the justification of his long-term aspirations toward authorship. There was a tension between authorial aspiration and necessary patience and humility in which the demands of public discourse became imperative. These ideas resurface in Linton's

enthusiasm for the Leader later in 1849, and thread through the English Republic poetry.

The break with London represented perhaps a natural escape from the crises in political dissent which were all too visible in London throughout 1848. 1849 became a period of re-evaluation. His move from the capital did not entail complete isolation, but coincided with a creative phase. In addition, an extensive surviving correspondence from 1849 shows that he was planning the Leader newspaper with Thornton Hunt, although Linton had lost his small degree of control in the content of the paper by 1850 because he said that he wanted 'to remain a free lance'.⁷⁷ He thought of himself as indispensable, but a letter from Thomas Ballantyne, one of the proprietors, shows that other members of the staff simply lost patience with Linton's intentions to make the Leader a vehicle for Mazzinian ideas.⁷⁸ This is just one example of many breaks in Linton's dealing with professionals outside of his own craft. Holyoake, a reliable witness of events at this time, hinted that Linton was difficult to work with: 'He may be said to resemble a handsome, but jealous, woman, pleasant to look upon, but disquieting to know, with whom repeated refutations of her suspicions do not count'.⁷⁹ In his personal relationships Linton lacked tact and sensitivity. Holyoake knew only too well that Linton held to the ideal of free speech, but was rarely careful about the ramifications of this principle for others.

In 1850 he joined forces in the production of the Red Republican with George Julian Harney, a member of the rival communist deputation to Paris in March 1848. The alliance suggests that the terms liberal and radical describe perspectives that were, to a certain degree, interchangeable. Linton could at any point in his career be described as either or both. The Red Republican is interesting for its anomalous

⁷⁷ Memories, p. 109.

⁷⁸ Thomas Ballantyne, to W. J. L., 13 July 1850, Feltrinelli 2/15.

⁷⁹ Warpath, p. 73

convergence of Howard Morton's (Helen Macfarlane) first English translation of Marx's 'Communist Manifesto' with Linton's translation of Mazzini's 'Republic and Royalty in Italy', while Linton's illustrated 'Letter from Lord Brougham' resembles an earlier era of radicalism in its resemblance to Cruikshank's illustrations for William Hone (Fig. 1).

Most of Linton's verse in the 1850s was published in his periodical the English Republic, the best-documented of all his publications in terms of contemporary information on its production. As a sustained account of Mazzinian republicanism the periodical has probably received as much attention as all of Linton's subsequent work combined. For historians of Victorian radicalism it forms a good source of information on the transition stages of Chartism; for researchers of Victorian journalism it forms a point of comparison in terms of style and content with the burgeoning daily popular press, such as Reynolds's Newspaper. Running from January 1851-April 1855, the periodical began as a series of essays in the Red Republican.⁸⁰ The periodical was distributed as a monthly inclusion with the Leeds-based temperance paper the Present Age for part of 1851 until that paper folded, at which point Watson took up publication of it on a monthly basis. As a contribution to republican letters it was well received throughout 1851.⁸¹ According to Linton, even Carlyle acknowledged the copies sent to him, and George Dawson, editor of the Birmingham Daily Press, was a regular and admiring reader.⁸²

In March 1852 Linton and his family moved to an isolated house on the shore of Coniston Water. Called Brantwood, it was a true haven where Linton cultivated his Wordsworthian sensibilities. In the autumn of that year he gave Brantwood as the address of the editorial office whence the periodical was printed and issued as a weekly

⁸⁰ 'Republican Principles', I-IX, 21 September - 30 November 1850.

⁸¹ Friend of the People, 11 January, 1 March 1851. Memories, p. 124.

⁸² Memories, p. 126, George Dawson, to W. J. L., 2 July [?] 1856, Feltrinelli 2/35.

TO MR. G. JULIAN HARNEY.

MY DEAR SIR.—The enclosed rhymed letter came to me by post, undated, with a simple request that I would forward it to you. I do not like to vouch for its genuineness. It may be, or it may not. My own opinion is, to speak truth, against it; but, then there is the internal evidence, which, however, does not go for much. Lord Brougham has tried his hand at so many things. Nevertheless, it does not follow that all which is put forth as his should be written by him. Sir James Graham's famous pamphlet was, I know, written by somebody else. This letter can, however, hardly be the work of a mere secretary. Such as it is, I send it to you. Your readers can form their own opinion on the matter.

M.P.

Your constant admirer,

October 27th (22nd Sunday after Advent), 1850



Figure 1. W. J. Linton, writer, artist and engraver, detail from 'Letter from Lord Brougham', Red Republican, 2 November 1850, p. 160.

tract for 1852-53. The return to monthly numbers in 1854-55 coincided with Linton's purchase in January 1854 of a hand press from which he simultaneously printed for Joseph Cowen the Northern Tribune. Like many of Linton's ventures, the Tribune made serious financial losses for all involved.⁸³ He had to cease the ER in 1855, but it represented a distillation of his work through the 1840s, and looked forward to later developments in his verse writing. The ER is rarely reactionary in tone, and its coherence derives from Linton's characteristic approach to a journalistic project in combining a detailed account of republican theory with varied forms of writing and reporting which draw their subjects, but not their forms of expression, from the broad political intentions of the periodical.

One of the lasting compensations of the bleak Brantwood years was a fellowship made up of republican sympathisers who joined Linton from the Cheltenham Republican Association. Among them was the pressman Thomas Hailing, and the compositor W. E. Adams. Adams became an important figure in Northern journalism and a regular correspondent with Linton until the 1890s. Some of their letters contain the kind of personal information that helps in creating a full view of Linton. In his autobiography Adams gave detailed accounts of how the periodical was printed, and told of how they worked through the severe winter of 1854.⁸⁴ But other contemporary commentators, such as George Somes Layard in his biography of Linton's third wife Eliza Lynn, pointed out the impracticality of conducting a periodical intended to disseminate republican thought from a relatively isolated part of the country.⁸⁵ However, in Linton's separation from the capital we can sense a deliberate exercise of independence in his close involvement with every aspect of the printing process. In

⁸³ James S. Dearden, 'Printing at Brantwood: Linton, the Republic and the Tribune', Book Collector 27 (1978), 514-32, (1979), 236-51. Further references will be given as Dearden.

⁸⁴ W. E. Adams, Memoirs of a Social Atom 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1903).

⁸⁵ Mrs. Lynn Linton: Her Life, Letters, and Opinions (London: Methuen, 1901).

many ways the press at Brantwood anticipates Linton's mode of working on his Appledore Press in America.

Despite assistance from James Watson and George Dawson, and the money brought in by Linton's engraving, the English Republic fared badly.⁸⁶ In April 1855, after deciding to wind up the printing operation at Brantwood, Linton found a buyer for the type. Two days later Linton wrote to Adams 'It may be better for us to depend on acts rather than on a republican literature'.⁸⁷ This comment sets the tone for the next ten years, when personal circumstances created a slowing down in nearly all areas of Linton's writing. His verse became more inward and introspective. A magazine under Linton's editorship intended for the family audience, Pen and Pencil appeared in February 1855. The paper carried a variety of material, with contributions by Walter Savage Landor and Eliza Lynn, enlivened by Henry Duff's engravings. It failed to find an audience, and ran for only eight weeks. Debt soon closed in on the Linton household and he turned to George Dawson for work.⁸⁸ An unwelcome addition to these burdens, and the cause of Linton's return to London, was Emily's death on 12 December 1856 at Joseph Cowen's house in Blaydon, the 'heavy sorrow' Linton mentioned in Memories.⁸⁹ Through this indirect reference to Emily's illness and death, Memories marks 1855 out as the end of the English Republic and a renewed acquaintance with cultural life in the form of his association with the Institute of Fine Arts and his friendships with Edward Wehnert, Alfred Stevens, and Godfrey Sykes.

At this time of crisis, practical and emotional support came in the form of the journalist and novelist Eliza Lynn, who had attended Emily during her illness. After Emily's death Linton left with Eliza to Hastings, for a brief period of recovery. Now more well-known than her husband as the first professional female journalist in Britain

⁸⁶ Memories, pp. 127-28.

⁸⁷ W. J. L., to W. E. Adams, 17 April 1855, Houghton.

⁸⁸ W. J. L., to George Dawson, 13 October 1856, Feltrinelli 5/31.

⁸⁹ Memories, p. 133.

and a prolific novelist, she received no mention in Memories. As a visitor to Brantwood from 1854, Eliza's early letters to the family show particular attachment to Linton's children.⁹⁰ She had attended Emily during her final illness, seeing Linton at his weakest. During 1857 Eliza became more emotionally involved with Linton and his children. They married March 1858 and moved to London in 1859. Engraving took over from political activism and publication. Between 1856 and 1865, in the uninterrupted exercise of his talent, he produced some of his most renowned engraving. Brantwood was let out to, among others, Gerald Massey, until Linton's return in 1863. The marriage was fraught with disagreements from the outset: Eliza had cemented relationships with successful members of the literary and political establishment, she is still recognised for her connections with Dickens and Landor, while William disregarded the value of money and embarrassed Eliza with his continued displays of support for revolutionary causes. Linton rarely mentioned Eliza even in private correspondence, where his answers to enquiries about her are extremely brief.

Personal correspondences, and Layard's life of Eliza, tell us that after their marriage Linton and Eliza continued the syllabus of home education when at Brantwood: he taught the children to draw, set type and print, took them for long nature rambles, and read the whole of the Pilgrim's Progress from the edition illustrated by David Scott. Linton's eldest daughter later recalled their early time with Eliza, and hinted at the incompatibility that eventually led to Linton and Eliza's permanent separation: 'My stepmother would remonstrate with him saying that charity should begin at home, and he answered- 'What I do for my family is only selfishness-I want to do something to help the world'.⁹¹ Such dialogue was transformed in Eliza's 'autobiographical' novel The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland (1885), in which Linton became Esther, 'a lecturer of some repute [. . .] her political creed was her

⁹⁰ Eliza Lynn Linton, to Willie Wade, 20 September 1854, NLA Ms 1698/211.

⁹¹ Margaret Linton Mather, to Parkes, 22 February 1914, V and A MSL/1938/2943/49.

religion; the emancipation of women her mission; the equalization of the sexes her shibboleth'.⁹² The novel gives an interesting, if extremely partial window on Linton's personal characteristics. In the novel, life at Brantwood figures as simplicity bordering on destitution, a view which probably reflected the truth. Linton's daughter in her correspondence with Parkes later sought to revise Layard's account, which is taken virtually verbatim from Eliza's highly coloured fictional version of her life with Linton.⁹³ Relatively little primary evidence of the marriage remains, but it is evident that it was in a slow state of fragmentation almost from the beginning.

Through Eliza, Linton came into closer contact with established poets, such as Swinburne and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who was an admirer of his engraving style and actively preferred Linton to the Dalziels as the engraver of his illustrations. In return, Linton thought Rossetti's poetry 'powerful'.⁹⁴ In balance however he found the social demands of respectable London life almost unbearable, and Layard laid this bare with anecdotes about Linton's associations with shady refugee revolutionaries. All of Linton's references to Eliza in correspondence were reluctant responses to requests for information about her, or comments laden with misgivings about the relationship. Beatrice Hartley, one of Eliza's 'adopted daughters', burned Linton's side of personal correspondence on Eliza's death, following Layard's instructions: 'There were many letters from Mr Linton written in terms of great affection and gratitude, in every letter, there was either a demand for money, or thanks for a substantial cheque received from her'.⁹⁵

Linton published little verse writing between 1856 and 1865, but he did invent a new process of printing, and collaborated with Alexander Gilchrist and the Rossetti brothers on the 1863 biography of Blake. A manuscript of draft verse from around this

⁹² Christopher Kirkland, pp. 20-21.

⁹³ Margaret Linton Mather, to Kinton Parkes, 22 February 1914, V and A MSL/1938/2943/49.

⁹⁴ Memories, p. 171.

⁹⁵ Beatrice Hartley, to Kinton Parkes, 30 January 1914, V and A MSL/1938/2943/11.

time, 'Love's Diary' shows the kind of introspective verse Linton was developing in parallel with writing intended as contributions to public discourse on republicanism. The inwardness of 'Love's Diary' matches the private nature of the subjects, but even here Linton did not consider it as a purely private document, but intended it to offer insight into disappointed personal aspirations. He did produce one interventional work in 1856, 'Carmen Triumphale', a scathing verse response to the end of the Crimean War, printed in pamphlet form and intended for distribution at the peace celebrations in London. However these were difficult years for Linton, and to keep out of debt engraving took over from his attempts to generate widespread interest in Mazzinian republicanism. He continued to view himself as a republican publicist, but confided the difficulty of his situation to Adams, 'Don't forget that I have lots of tracts and back numbers, always at your service [. . .] I must not flinch from an hour's engraving this next year [. . .] to clear myself from debt'.⁹⁶

Of all the projects in which Linton collaborated, the Gilchrist Blake might be used to encapsulate his skills as an engraver, and the diverse threads that are involved in his career.⁹⁷ The Lake Country followed in 1864, Eliza and Linton's only collaboration. Illustrated by Linton's engravings of his own watercolour drawings, the book became a standard volume on the bookcases of many mid-Victorian literati (Fig. 2, 3, 4).⁹⁸ Preparation for the illustrations allowed Linton to engage in his preferred occupations: walking, communing with nature, and sketching. The book was successful, and the project paid well, but work was sparse through 1864.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ W. J. L., to Adams, 24 December 1855, Houghton.

⁹⁷ Alexander Macmillan, NLA Ms 1698/64, 66 1861. Anne Gilchrist, to W. J. L., 1 April 1864, Feltrinelli 2/49.

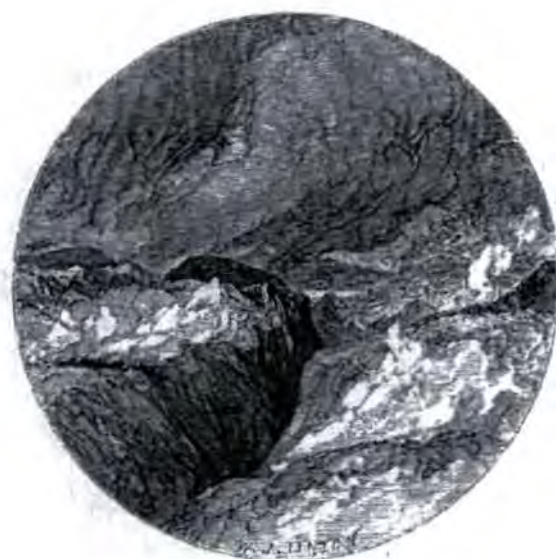
⁹⁸ Sketchbooks: May to August 1863, Beinecke. June to July 1863, Hay.

⁹⁹ Smith and Elder, to W. J. L. 27 February 1863, Smith and Elder, to W. J. L. November 15 1864, Feltrinelli 4/31.

*K
Lynn afterwards Linton (E.)*

THE
LAKE COUNTRY

BY
E. LYNN LINTON



WITH A MAP
AND ONE HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS DRAWN AND ENGRAVED BY
W. J. LINTON

LONDON: SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL
1864

Figure 2. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, title page of Eliza Lynn Linton's The Lake Country (1864).

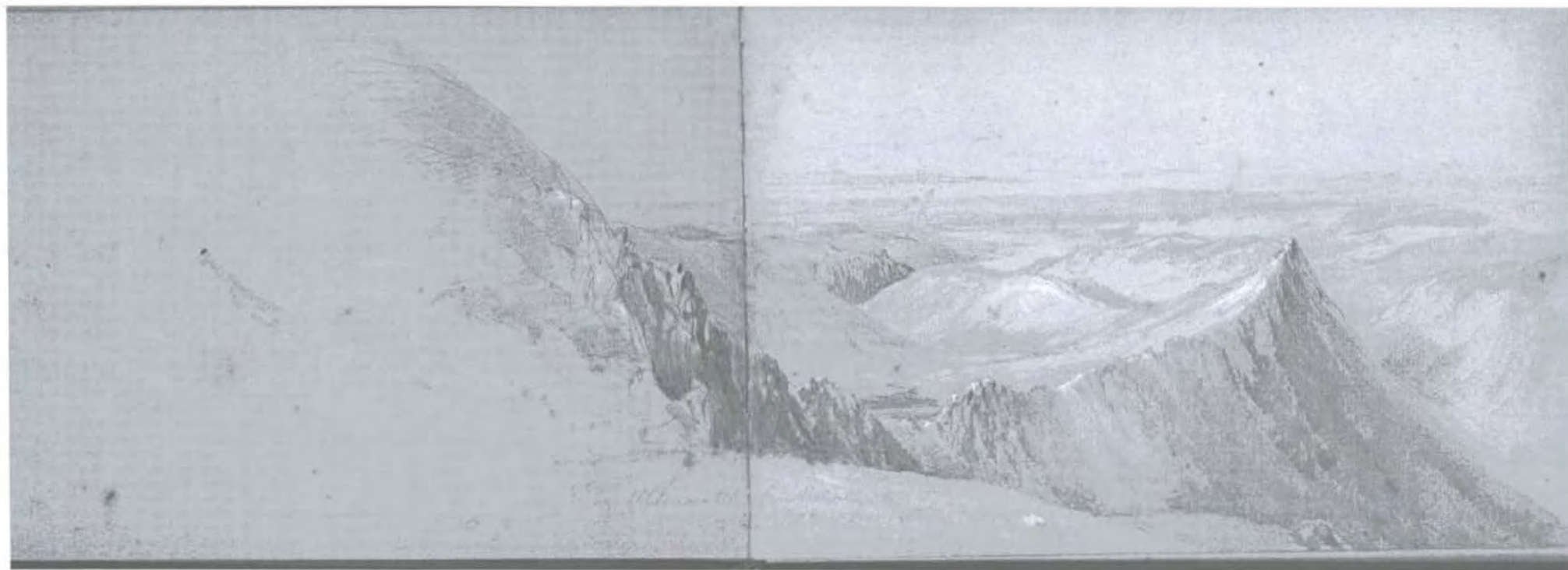


Figure 3. W. J. Linton, study for The Lake Country, dated July 1863, pencil and body colour.



Figure 4. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, 'Striding Edge', from The Lake Country.

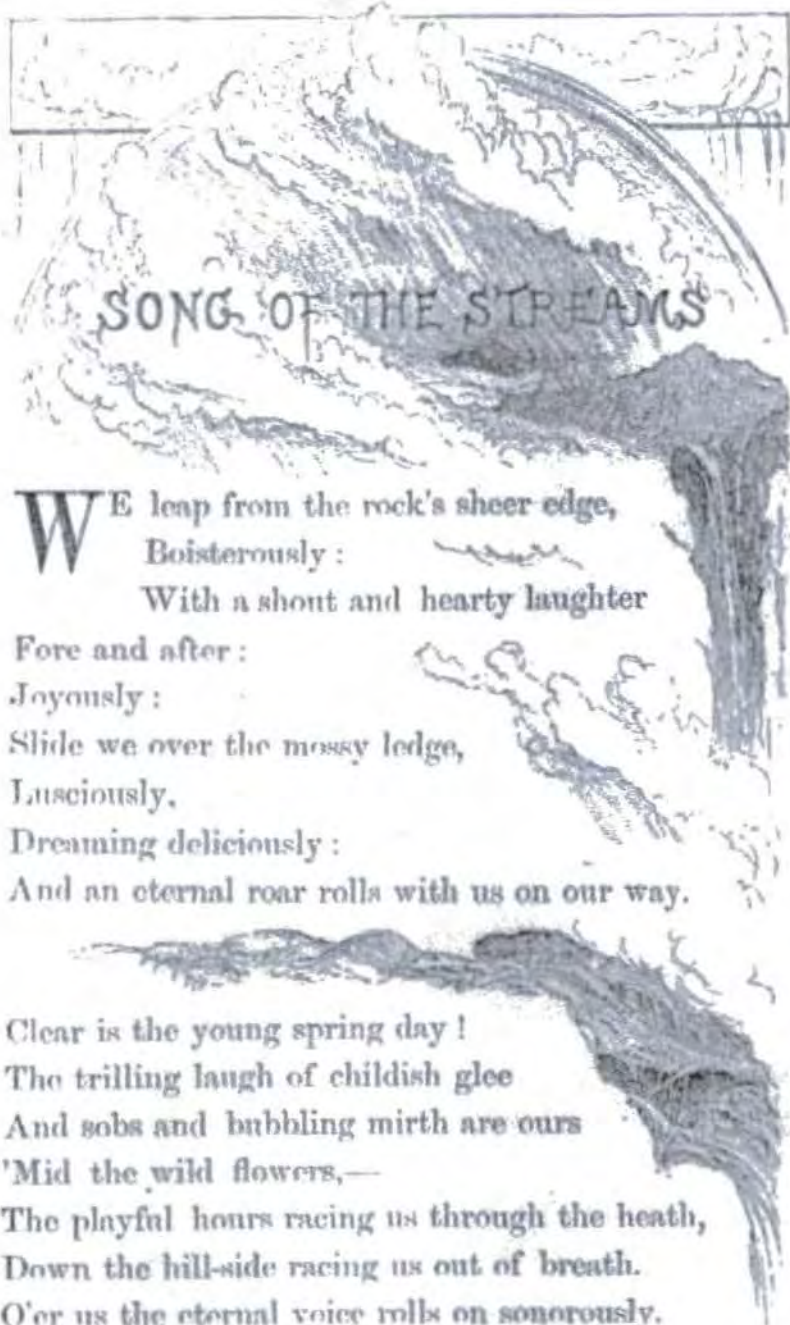
The 1865 collection Claribel and other Poems was Linton's first large scale verse publication for nine years. To readers familiar with Linton as the radical and Chartist, the collection seems to present a very different writer from the editor of the English Republic in the preference for love lyrics and sentimental verse. The variety of work is however representative of his diverse output over the 1850s. The title poem was a version in verse of a Charles Wells short story first published in 1845. Wells, yet another neglected writer Linton attempted to bring into public prominence, had been a friend of Keats and was an influence on Dante Gabriel Rossetti. While the political verse in the collection feels retrospective, his elegy for Paul Darasz, originally printed in the English Republic, remained a strong piece divorced from its original context. Linton found the public response to the book disappointing, and wrote to Adams that 'The Pall Mall Gazette denied me any right to be called a poet, but praised my illustrations to the skies'. His skill for the miniature in the design and execution of the illustrations in the book won approval, as it always would (Fig. 5).¹⁰⁰

1866 seems to have been a time of reckoning for Linton. His separation from Eliza, the supply of engraving work drying up, and further deaths in his family were emotional and financial strains that Linton's stoicism refused entry into the official version of his life. To his son Willie Wade he admitted to an increasing preoccupation with the past, and began thinking about his first wife Laura.¹⁰¹ It was also nearly ten years since Emily had died. The correspondence with Willie and Adams shows clearly the personal and financial stresses Linton was under by the end of 1866. His son Lance died in December 1863 and his daughter Gypsy was 'suffering sadly'.¹⁰² In one of his final letters before he travelled to America, Linton wrote: 'I am planning to go to New York in the course of a few days hence [. . .] I have the promise of work there the

¹⁰⁰ W. J. L., to Adams, 24 April [?] 1864, Houghton.

¹⁰¹ W. J. L., to Willie, 11 April 1865, Feltrinelli 1/13.

¹⁰² W. J. L., to Adams, 15 September 1863, Houghton.



WE leap from the rock's sheer edge,
Boisterously :
With a shout and hearty laughter
Fore and after :
Joyously :
Slide we over the mossy ledge,
Lusciously,
Dreaming deliciously :
And an eternal roar rolls with us on our way.

Clear is the young spring day !
The trilling laugh of childish glee
And sobb and bubbling mirth are ours
'Mid the wild flowers,—
The playful hours racing us through the heath,
Down the hill-side racing us out of breath.
O'er us the eternal voice rolls on sonorously.

Figure 5. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from *Claribel* (1865).

moment I land; and hope to make money and bring some back. I do not of course mean to stay there'.¹⁰³ Friends and acquaintances had the impression that it would be a temporary move.¹⁰⁴ Still waiting to gather funds for travel at the end of October, he borrowed £5 from Adams, left Willie to look after Brantwood, and sailed in November 1866, never to live permanently in England again.

Linton was to spend thirty one years in America, a creatively and financially successful period which, however, occupies only the final three chapters of Memories, where the lively narrative becomes a list of acquaintances and personalities. It is ironic however that a sense of creative fulfilment actually comes through most clearly in these final chapters. Like the early part of his life, the American years in Memories require considerable augmentation from manuscript sources. Arrival at America in Memories occasioned his comment that 'the object of these recollections is not to speak of myself'. The people and events he included show the eagerness with which he associated himself with men and women whom he perceived as American equivalents of English conservative radicals, particularly the members of the Boston abolition movement and the Century Club. Perhaps his summary approach is explained by the fact that he was taking his status and reputation for granted and felt no need to reiterate what seemed so widely known in the press and by fellow engravers. Indeed, when he arrived he found that he was fairly well known as a poet.¹⁰⁵ Linton's description of the American phase in Memories begins with how he travelled with the plan that he could earn enough to repay his debts back home. He carried various letters of introduction, a commission to write about his observations of America for the Examiner, and from Mazzini, the task of reviving the American branches of the People's International

¹⁰³ W. J. L., to Adams, 1 October [1866], Houghton.

¹⁰⁴ Rossetti Papers 1862 to 1870, ed. by William Michael Rossetti (London: Sands, 1903), p. 196.

¹⁰⁵ Sheridan J. Dwight, to W. J. L., 28 April 1879, Feltrinelli 5/18. W. J. L., to W. E. Adams, 20 April 1893, Houghton.

League, although the Mazzini bonds of the association were later used by Linton as notepaper and sketchpads.

For someone who was visually sensitive, the experience of a first voyage to New York received cursory attention in Memories and even his longer version 'Coming Across', written in 1866 for All the Year Round, treated the voyage as a routine occurrence.¹⁰⁶ The reality of emigration was different. Writing Memories in 1894, Linton concealed the feelings of desperation associated with money and family behind a public façade of geniality and professional success:

Thought kindly of by the men of my profession, I had a supper given me by the Society of Wood Engravers, and was almost immediately taken hold of by Frank Leslie to work for his *Illustrated News*, and afterwards engaged by him to conduct the pictorial portion.

My welcome seemed a sufficient reason for my contemplating a longer stay in the States. I had only thought of remaining so long as might be necessary to organise a party for Italy, and to see something of the people and the country.¹⁰⁷

His initial difficulties in New York in November and December 1866 are only evident in the correspondence to Adams and Willie Wade, an instance of the value of personal documents as part of a study on Linton's career. The concealment of personal difficulties in Memories shows Linton's anxiety about the perception of his reasons for emigrating. Memories would have its audience think of emigration as a bold move, an ideal act. The surviving letters to his family give a more personal account of his relationship with the city: how he had to walk two miles for his meals, the disparity he found between wealth and poverty, and the extent to which he missed his family.¹⁰⁸ In 1894 Linton was aware that Eliza would be one of his readers. Perhaps the extremely

¹⁰⁶ Draft ms, Beinecke.

¹⁰⁷ Memories, p. 205.

¹⁰⁸ W. J. L., to Willie, 23 November 1866, Feltrinelli 1/14

guarded outlook in the American chapters was defined by his defensiveness about his popularity and status.

According to one of his English Republic companions, Linton's purpose in America was to found a 'republican party such as we understand the word'.¹⁰⁹ To this end Linton set up an association called 'The Universal Republic'. To publicise the organisation he published verse in anti-slavery and radical papers. Through Wendell Philips, Linton was courteously received by President Grant, who listened to his description of Mazzini's ideas 'with no appearance of interest or understanding'.¹¹⁰ However, for Linton the engraver, professional success came easily in the new world. By January 1867 Linton was 'getting on very well with his business'.¹¹¹ A group of New York engravers were delighted to have among them the engraver whose work had influenced their own, and asked him to write a book 'relating to the art of engraving'.¹¹² Work with Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper began in early 1867, and his first large scale engraving for the paper, based on his early observations of New York weather, was appreciated in the context of the effect of his white line style throughout the paper in the preceding weeks (Fig. 6). The New York press was effusive in its recognition that a major talent had arrived: 'So far as wood-engraving is concerned, we are in a miserable plight at present [. . .] Mr Linton has come to set us in a different and better way, and we assure him, he is entirely welcome'.¹¹³ A self-portrait followed, in which he represented himself as a distinguished figure as part of the cultural establishment in New York (Fig. 7).

¹⁰⁹ James Glover, to W. E. Adams, 8 October 1867, Houghton.

¹¹⁰ Memories, p. 153.

¹¹¹ Willie Wade, to Adams, 21 January 1867, Houghton.

¹¹² A. G. Holcomb and nineteen others, to W. J. L., 9 February 1867, Beinecke.

¹¹³ New York Tribune, 7 February 1867.



TRAVELLERS LOST IN THE SNOW.—ENGRAVED FROM A STUDY, BY W. J. LINTON.—SEE PAGE 323.

Figure 6. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, 'Travellers Lost in the Snow', Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 9 February 1867.

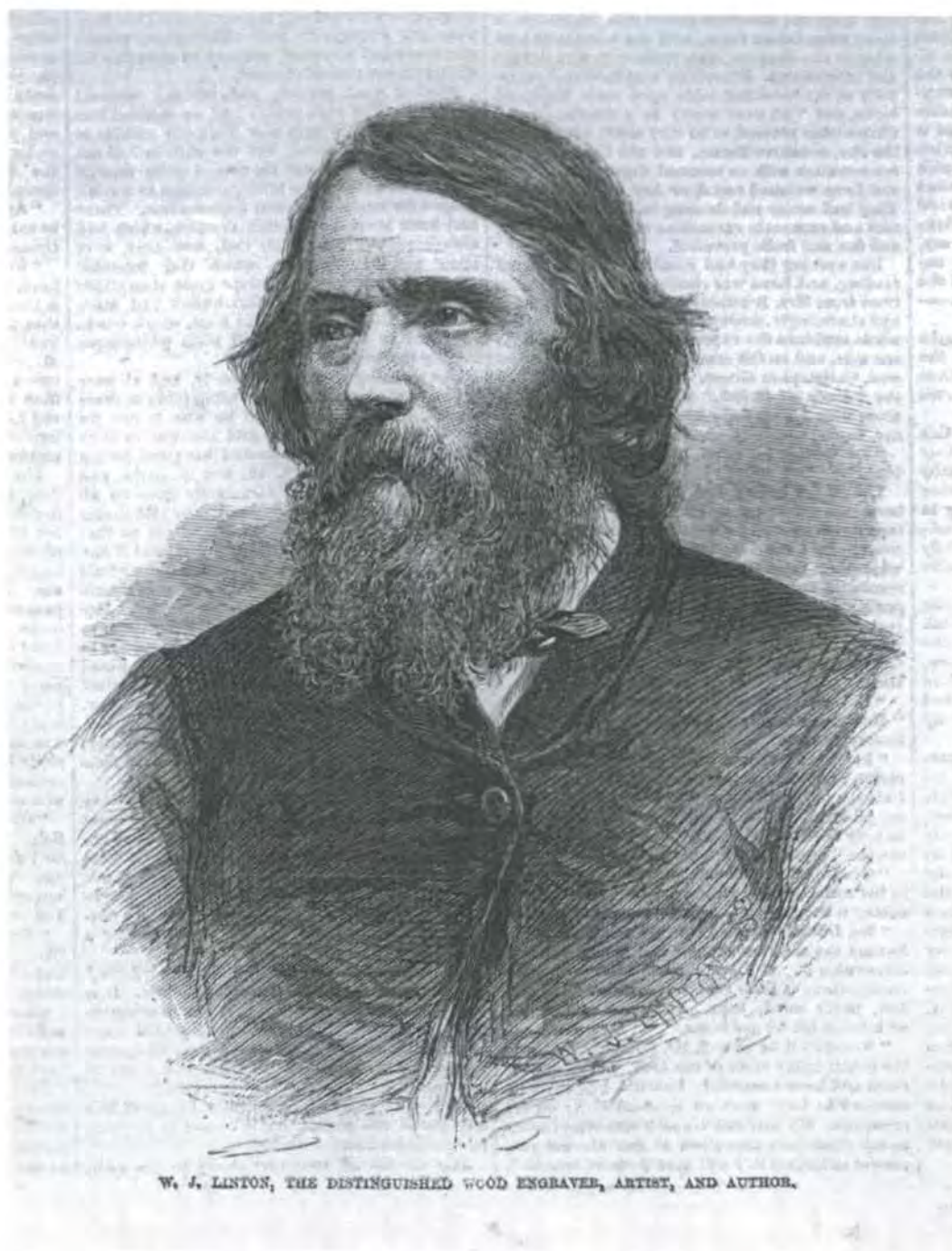


Figure 7. W. J. Linton, engraver, self-portrait, printed in Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper (1867).

Once Linton was established as the principal engraver for Frank Leslie's Newspaper, the work flowed freely, and in the autumn of 1867 he returned to Europe as Leslie's correspondent on the Paris Exposition. He passed through the recently let Brantwood, and reluctantly arranged for his children to live in London; he wanted to take them to America, but lacked the money to do so. Margaret, his eldest daughter, and Ellen eventually travelled to America in 1869. Gypsy, one of his daughters, was further source of distress during his first return home. It seems that she might have been mentally ill, and had to be placed in Dumfries Asylum where she died in 1881. Despite all of this, Linton expressed his relief at the compensations of the emigrant life to which he had by the end of 1867 become resigned: 'thank God there is good work for me in America'.¹¹⁴ A manuscript volume of poems dated from 1865-1875, in which the drafts from 1866 onwards are entitled 'In America', represents transition in several senses: it shows how Linton was struggling to find a voice with which to describe his experiences.¹¹⁵ The effects of American culture and society are detectable in this document. The lyrics became progressively introspective, and even those dealing with public themes take on the characteristics of meditative lyrics, but as Chapter Six shows, it would be misleading to describe this as a process of polarisation of public and private aspirations. The place of creative aspiration in Linton's public commitments was changing: he was constructing a distinct kind of poetic voice for his personal concerns. Linton's uncertainty about the efficacy of his poetic voice and purpose is suggested in 'Ad Futuram', the concluding sequence of Broadway Ballads (1875), a work which shows how Linton continued to develop his interest in combining oral and literary forms as a vital element of his poetry. In a poem from 'Ad Futuram' the speaker describes how he arrived in America bearing 'bitter almond kernels / In weed-woven basket, —

¹¹⁴ W. J. L., to Adams, 6 September 1867, Houghton.

¹¹⁵ Ms 'Poems 1865-66', Beinecke.

they were all my best' (Poem 6 ll. 5-6). This image shows that Linton was aware of how most Americans responded to his vision of republicanism.

Linton capitalised on this financial security, exchanging his radical credentials and reputation for membership and attendance at the Boston Radical Club, and the various abolitionist meetings still being held after the war.¹¹⁶ Acceptance into American culture was, however, symbolised for Linton by his membership of the Century Club, a prestigious New York group presided over by William Cullen Bryant (Fig. 8) and including Walt Whitman and Edmund Clarence Stedman.¹¹⁷ Professional success through 1867 and 1868 meant that Linton could be offhand about the \$100 entrance fee to the club, as well as sending money home to his family.¹¹⁸ The Century gradually became the centre of Linton's life in America. The fact that members supported his exhibitions and publications, and that some of them collaborated with him on his various editorial projects, forms the centre of the final chapters of *Memories*. Linton thought that America would benefit from exposure to European culture and acted on this instinct. Linton planned to show and sell specimens 'of the manner and ability [. . .] among the very best of English artists'.¹¹⁹ Harvey Orrinsmith, the son of his old partner, was Linton's London agent in exporting a consignment of English watercolours, chosen by the artists, for an exhibition in winter 1867.

Linton the engraver was respected and successful, but American insularity generated disquiet in Linton the republican. The post-war political situation he found on arrival did not develop into the kind of republic he had imagined in his periodicals and poetry. Many of the incidents he recalled from this early period in America formed an implied critique on the shortcomings of Reconstruction. They also serve to underline

¹¹⁶ Invitation to radical Club meetings, Reverend John T. Sargent to W. J. L., 14 November 1868, Beinecke.

¹¹⁷ *Memories*, p. 221.

¹¹⁸ W. J. L., to Willie, 29 January 1868, Feltrinelli 1/16. W. J. L., to family, 7 May 1867, Feltrinelli 1/15, and 5 November 1867 Feltrinelli 1/15.

¹¹⁹ W. J. L., to Harvey Orrin Smith, 6 November 1867, NLA Ms 1698/90, 91.



Figure 8. W. J. Linton. portrait of William Cullen Bryant.

the main thread of Memories, the continuity of his republican convictions, which often emerged as provocative comments in public contexts: ‘once at a lecture upon Abraham Lincoln, given by Emerson at the Radical Club in Boston, his praise of Lincoln seemed to me to exclusive, and, as each of the audience was asked to make some brief comment on the lecture, I ventured to suggest that John Brown should have place of honour beside the President’.¹²⁰ Such direct support of the Boston radical movement’s post-war programme for immediate progress in universal suffrage was applauded by abolitionist companions but, like the verse he published between 1867 and 1871, his terms were considered unduly critical by a wider audience. His 1869 lecture The Religion of Organisation, later printed in the Radical, treaded a similarly thin line between acceptable and unacceptable criticism, but the reporter of the National Anti-Slavery Standard described how the audience was deeply impressed by Linton’s account of the basis of universal equality.¹²¹ The reception of the speech indicates that Linton was beginning to find a public voice in America. The extracts included in Prose and Verse show how Linton conducted both his long distance relationship with England and his developing thoughts about American democracy in his customary form, lyrical verse. His initial feelings about America were positive: ‘he is much taken up with America as far as he has seen and whilst admitting that there is much there to deplore as worse than this country he can see a great deal that is very much better’.¹²² But the poem ‘To Americans’ printed in the NASS in November 1867 shows how quick Linton was to criticize his new home: ‘What is he who listens idly, / Passing on without reply?’. The figure of American society distancing itself from its responsibilities to other republican nations returned in one of Linton’s most interesting works, the Broadway Ballads, written in 1875, which used New York as a symbol of American democracy. The verse

¹²⁰ Memories, p. 211.

¹²¹ Radical, 5 April 1869, pp. 265-292, National Anti Slavery Standard, 13 February 1869, p. 29. Further references to the latter will be given as NASS.

¹²² James Glover, to Adams, 8 October 1867, Houghton.

of 1867-68 was concerned with humanitarian themes, but in a context of distanced observation. 'Our Need', a poem printed in the NASS, suggests the type of compromise that Linton had found between conviction and action: 'We need the men of '89, / Though we avoid their path; / We need their energy divine, their fire if not their wrath' (ll. 9-11).¹²³ This type of distanced approval of intention but not of method was echoed in his later comment about Lamennais' view on the Paris insurrection of June 1848, that his 'sympathies, if not approving their action, being with the Insurgents'. This kind of distance may equally apply to the terms of Linton's support of the Commune in 1871.¹²⁴ He maintained a public interest in humanitarian themes, and portrayed himself as the old Chartist still engaged in the 'battle of rights', and ascribed the failure of Chartism as the result of political compromise: 'too many had been tempted from the ranks by Brights and Cobdens offering cheap bread to 'recruit the "garrison" of our present institutions'. In Linton's view Chartism failed because of 'Manchester men'.¹²⁵ But the American party and electoral system troubled him to the extent that he compromised his long-term support of universal suffrage by advising women not to participate in campaigning for voting rights within the terms of the existing political system.¹²⁶

The solitude of the distant observer had always been latent in Linton's personality, but he concealed it by constant involvement with socially demanding political activity. This solitude gradually became a heightened element in his verse writing, leading eventually to his lyrical meditations on the space separating his past and present in Love-Lore. This tendency in his writing, present since the 1850s, was matched by his increasing disenchantment with American democracy as the accepted form of republicanism for the rest of the world. He wrote that 'Anglo Saxons here as in

¹²³ NASS, 4 May 1867.

¹²⁴ Memories, p. 105.

¹²⁵ 'What do Women Want?' Women's Advocate March 1869, in P and V, vol. 17.

¹²⁶ 'Political Equality' Women's Advocate, April 1869, 'Contrariwise' Woman's Advocate, in P and V, vol. 17.

India and elsewhere show but too much remaining of the old brutality'.¹²⁷ It is difficult to be sure of what he meant by 'old brutality': it could imply specific forms of leadership, or the propagation of the old class system. It might have been a reference to the native victims of colonisation. For someone deeply concerned with racism and equality, the absence of the native American in Linton's public discourse is a significant omission from a modern perspective. There are references to the displacement of the native population in his poems, but in the form of personal meditation rather than protest:

It's best such wretches were clear'd out o' the way-
 -Perhaps so! Out of the way of what you call
 Your civilization. [. . .]
 Lies, fraud and lechery: if you bring these
 As tokens of superiority,
 I recognize your right to exterminate-
 Not men whom you have treated with, and sworn
 To hold in bonds of peace ('Indians', ll. 8-10, 17-21)¹²⁸

However, he was active and vocal in the independence of Cuba in 1868 which showed that notions of humanity and human rights were concrete identities which Linton related to the culture around him.¹²⁹

1870 witnessed a series of events that directly affected Linton's development as a writer: drawn to Boston but dependent on New York for work, Linton settled for mid way: Appledore, a house in rural Hamden on the outskirts of New Haven. Through his lawyer Linton had reminded Ruskin of his earlier thought to buy Brantwood.¹³⁰ Eliza was alarmed at this development, and expressed disappointment that her husband failed

¹²⁷ W. J. L., to Adams, 11 March 1879, Houghton.

¹²⁸ *Windfalls* (Hamden: Appledore Private Press, [?] 1879).

¹²⁹ Roman Cespedes, to W. J. L., Richard J. Hinton, letters to W. J. L., 30 January, 14 March 1869, Beinecke.

¹³⁰ Feltrinelli 1/17C.

to consult her before continuing the legal proceedings.¹³¹ The house changed hands in September 1871, effectively severing his last substantive link with England.¹³² Linton's constant correspondence with W. E. Adams, who visited Appledore in 1882, maintained a connection with his English Republic years. The Century members had replaced his previous friendships and business partners in Britain, and dialogue with acquaintances now more well-known personalities began to fade out. The long suffering William Bell Scott, Linton's friend since 1841, wrote that 'D.G.R [Dante Gabriel Rossetti] and others often ask me after you but I am dumb'.¹³³

Appledore was his final home, and in 1877 he set up a hand press from which he printed and issued editions of his own work, and poetry anthologies edited by himself, with the imprint APP (Appledore Private Press).¹³⁴ Also in 1870 he was elected a member of National Academy of Design.¹³⁵ As an elected a member of National Academy of Design he could engage fully with American artistic culture. This began in typically combative style with an article on 'French and English Illustrated Magazines' in the Nation.¹³⁶ The article, Linton's response to what he perceived as ill-informed criticism of wood engraving by an Atlantic Monthly reviewer, was the opening salvo in a debate about engraving as an art which exposed him to the ire of the American periodicals loyal to Timothy Cole's impressionism-influenced 'New School' of wood engraving.

Initial prosperity was tempered by the failure of American Enterprise in 1871, an illustrated broadsheet that Linton had planned as a way of relieving the necessity for so much engraving work, and to enable him to enter 'political life'.¹³⁷ The paper was well-

¹³¹ NLA Ms 1698/276.

¹³² John Ruskin, to W. J. L., 20 September 1871, Hay.

¹³³ William Bell Scott, to W. J. L., 15 January 1870, Beinecke.

¹³⁴ APP will be used throughout this thesis.

¹³⁵ W. J. L., to Willie, 19 May 1870, Feltrinelli 1/17B.

¹³⁶ Nation, 2 June 1870.

¹³⁷ W. J. L., to Willie, 19 July 1869, Feltrinelli 1/17A.

received in the New York press, and carried fine work by Linton after the artist W. J. Hennessey, but did not continue beyond the second number (Fig. 9).

In American Enterprise Linton printed his illustrated political squib 'The House that Tweed Built' which transposed his recollections of Hone and Cruikshank's pamphlets into a very different context. However, despite these public gestures of engagement with American political life, a disagreement with the Reform League in 1872 represented Linton's last attendance at a political meeting.¹³⁸ From this point onwards his contact with politics in Europe and America from was defined by writing, but he remained closely concerned with the wider implications of American foreign policy.

Through 1872 engraving work kept flowing in.¹³⁹ Despite the economic depression that began in 1873 Linton kept receiving engraving contracts, although he took on every job due to the relative scarcity of work.¹⁴⁰ The firm of Osgood, one of Linton's main sources of work, had shut down its magazine trade. Linton exploited the slump in trade to develop some personal projects that he anticipated would bring profit as well as reputation. His spare time was spent working on a long-planned history of wood-engraving.¹⁴¹

The market for engraving had improved by 1875, when Linton wrote that he had \$500 of work in hand.¹⁴² A string of successful engraving projects had kept him going: John Greenleaf Whittier's Snowbound (1872), Jane G. Austin's Moonfolk (1874), and Longfellow's The Hanging of the Crane (1875), as well as countless magazine and newspaper engravings preserved in albums of his work.¹⁴³ His own drawing style was

¹³⁸ Radical Artisan, p. 174.

¹³⁹ James Dutton, to W. J. L., 16 July 1872, Feltrinelli 4/40.

¹⁴⁰ W. J. L., to Willie, 27 November 1873, Feltrinelli 1/17D.

¹⁴¹ W. J. L. to Willie, 13 November 1873, Feltrinelli 1/17D.

¹⁴² W. J. L. to Willie, 8 February 1875, Feltrinelli 1/18B.

¹⁴³ Proof engravings album MEYI, NYPL, Album NE1143.5 L5A3 (compiled 1895) and Album NE1143.5 L5A32, Hay.



Figure 9. W. J. Hennessey, artist, and W. J. Linton, engraver, broadsheet advertisement from *American Enterprise* (1870).

fastidious, conditioned by his engraving skills, but it did not adapt well to the kind of rapid figurative work demanded by the daily press. However, his illustrations for William Cullen Bryant's poems in Thanatopsis ([?] 1874) and The Flood of Years (1877) were the work of a thoughtful draughtsman and gifted engraver. The books are virtually unknown. As late products of his skill it might seem puzzling to a modern audience why Linton did not attempt anything like them earlier. A discussion of these questions, and the illustrations themselves, has relevance to this thesis because of their literary emphasis and for their place in showing the way Linton's creative aspirations developed in maturity.

Most of his publications from these years were the result of his individual creative or editorial efforts: set, and printed, often without any assistance, on a manual press he had acquired in 1877 (Fig. 10). The significance of this lay in the independence that a press gave from publishers. In 1875 Linton referred to the first work he intended to print, a biography of James Watson as a 'history of our working class endeavours for free speech and a place in the nation'.¹⁴⁴ More than once he expressed frustration that opportunities for publication were becoming limited, primarily because of the nature of the satirical verse that he was producing, although Adams was a support in the 1870s and 80s.¹⁴⁵ Linton tended to seize on any context in which he could print his work. The nature of his writing was paralleled by an interest in canon formation and the place of his own work in it. By the mid 1870s Linton was being taken up by various individuals with established voices in the literary world with interests in different strands of his career. H. Buxton Forman began to consult Linton in 1875 about Shelley, Charles Wells and Ebenezer Jones, and Edmund Clarence Stedman had been assisted by him while writing Victorian Poets in which Linton was mentioned.

¹⁴⁴ W. J. L., to Adams, 10 August 1875, Houghton.

¹⁴⁵ W. J. L., letters to Adams, 28 March 1876, 22 July 1885, 19 March 1887, 11 August 1891, 23 January 1896, Houghton.



Figure 10. Linton at the Appledore Press, c. mid 1880s.

Linton's anxiety about his own status is demonstrated in his editorial work, and he consoled himself about his attempts to win recognition by writing that 'the desire of appreciation belongs to a healthy mind.'¹⁴⁶

The press was also used to set up single copies of books as specimens for potential publishers. The household economy was fed by his lucrative engraving contracts, and the work on the hand-press was funded through advance subscription to the final limited edition books. In this way Linton satisfied his latent, unfulfilled literary aspirations while maintaining a degree of personal involvement and creative control over the form of the books consonant with his idea of the creative individual in society. Book production also allowed him to bring together his talent and ingenuity as an engraver and graphic artist, his knowledge of literary tradition, and a feeling for the lesser known works and poets in that tradition. There were the anthologies: the Poetry of America (1878, reprinted 1887) the Golden Apples of Hesperus (1882), Rare Poems of the Sixteenth Century (1882), and English Verse (1884). He compiled some anthologies around 1884 with the titles 'Transatlantic Verse', 'Chansons', 'Heroic Verse', and 'Humorists in English Verse'.¹⁴⁷ These anthologies remained in manuscript form, but 'Transatlantic Verse', if published, would have been a distinctive anthology with its inclusion of poetry by the Brontës and William Barnes. Adams, who had become Linton's support in Britain, printing verse and articles in the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, visited Appledore in 1882. The terms of his account tell us how Linton's independence struck a contemporary: 'Though he was in his seventieth year, he was engaged in occupations which would seem to require the energy and strength of a person twenty years younger [. . .] Mr Linton was even more completely the author and producer of his own books than William Blake was [. . .] for Blake, it may be

¹⁴⁶ W. J. Linton, 'Reminiscences of Ebenezer Jones' p. lxiv, in Ebenezer Jones, Studies of Sensation and Event, ed. by R. H. Shepherd (London: Pickering, 1879).

¹⁴⁷ Beinecke. W. J. L., to Willie, 29 June 1884, Feltrinelli 1/23.

remembered, had the assistance of his wife, while Linton had no assistant whatever'.¹⁴⁸

Adams was reminded of Blake because of Linton's role as printer of his own work.

Linton's most successful verse works written in America were the Broadway Ballads, Pot-Pourri (1875), Windfalls (1879), Love-Lore (1887), Poems and Translations (1889), Helioconundrums (1892), Love-Lore and Other, Early and Late Poems (1895). The sheer manual effort of printing on a manual press meant that numbers of copies of editions from the Appledore Press were extremely limited. None of this work is referred to in Memories, despite the fact that Linton thought of Broadway Ballads his best writing. Indeed, in the Ballads Linton created some kind of happy balance in the synthesis of sequence, political and personal purposes, a discussion of which forms the core of Chapter Six.

Through the 1880s his engraving, which retained his characteristic dexterity, was sought and valued by American publishers and public (Fig. 11, 12). The country's most prominent engravers publicly acknowledged Linton's influence on their work.¹⁴⁹ While his poetry and books from the Appledore Press were received and circulated among a tiny audience Linton had become a well-known figure in New England life, and his Masters of Wood-Engraving, which he regarded as his finest prose work, was received with enthusiasm by supporters of the Arts and Crafts movement.¹⁵⁰ Samuel Perry's portrait of November 1884, which was probably encouraged by Linton, and photographic portraits show Linton engraving, surrounded by his artistic and political heroes, working in the peace and solitude of which his later poetry speaks so clearly (Fig. 13, 14). These images correspond with the self-portrait in Memories of the master engraver living out a contented retirement after fifty years as an associate of the 'remarkable personages' in publishing, politics and art, fields which he often combined.

¹⁴⁸ Our American Cousins (London: Walter Scott, 1887), p. 293.

¹⁴⁹ J. P. Davis, 'The New School of Engraving', Century Magazine, n.s. 16 (1889) 587-89.

¹⁵⁰ Arthur Mackmurdo, 'A Note on "The Masters of Wood Engraving," by W. J. Linton', Century Guild Hobby Horse, 7 (December 1892) 110-114.

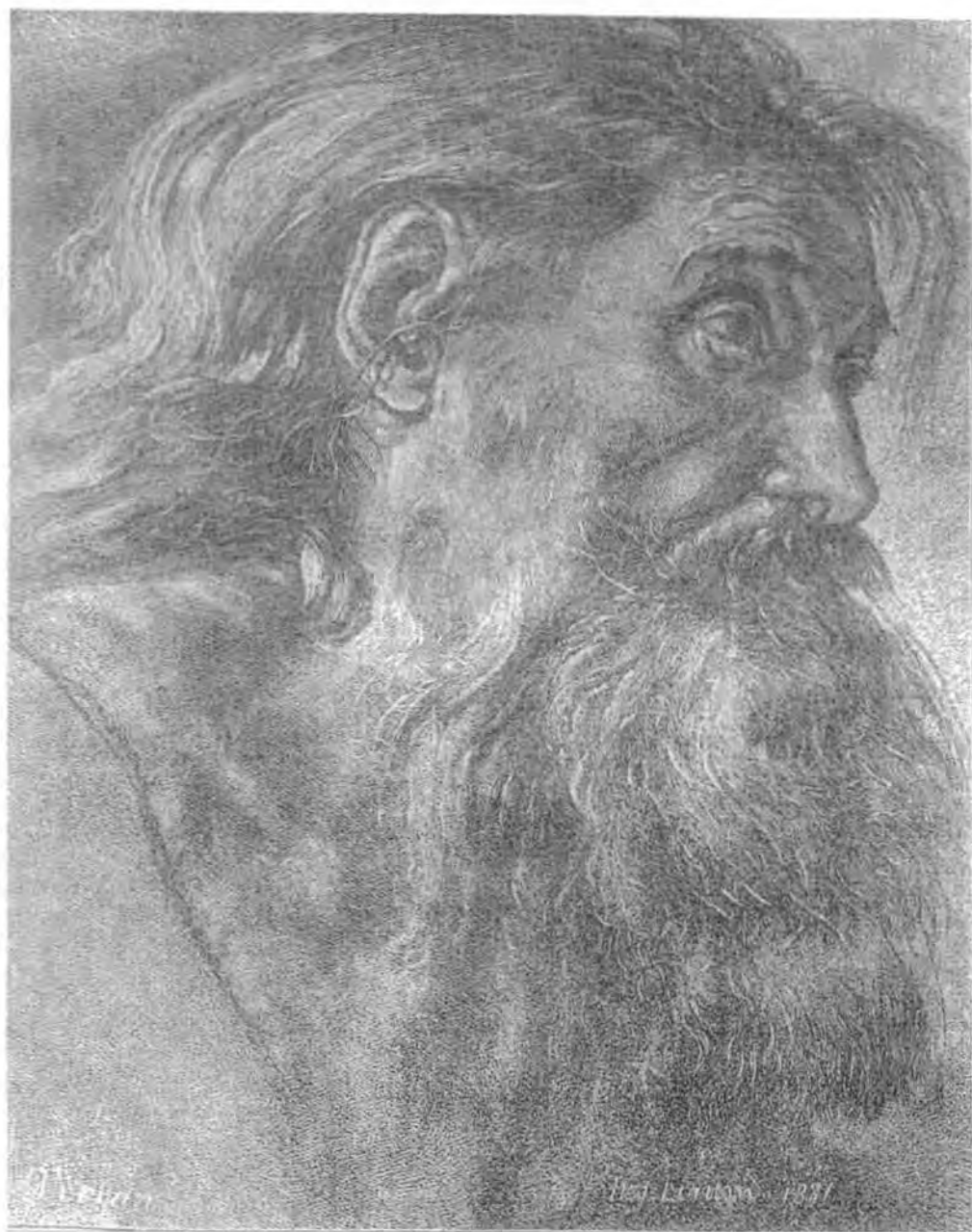


Figure 11. W. J. Linton, draughtsman and engraver, wood engraving after Titian, dated 1881.



Now I shall reap with none near me.

Line 619.

Figure 12. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, illustration for a poem in Nikolai Alekseevich Nekrasov's Moroz krasnyi-nos (Red-nosed Frost, 1887)

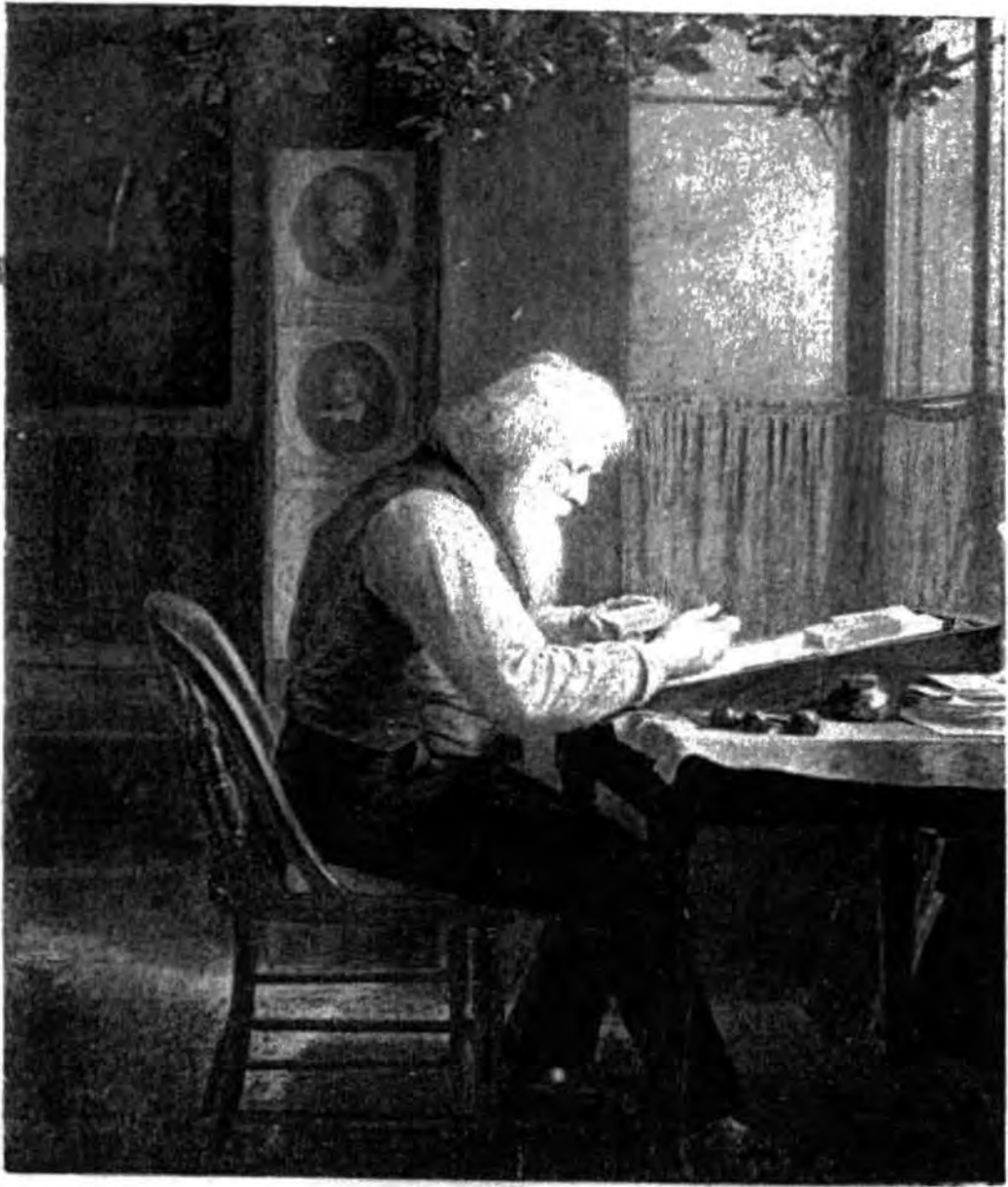


Figure 13. Samuel Perry, portrait of W. J. Linton, oil on canvas (1884)



Figure 14. Linton in his Apple-dore studio, c. 1890.

Linton's American life from around 1875 was characterised by a less direct engagement with political organisations: he had not played the role of participant in politics since 1872, and this is reflected by the shift in Memories from politics to personal relationships in the form of his connections within the Century Club. However, the body of work Linton generated in the productive period 1874 to 1883 is a testament to his emphasis on personal creativity without necessarily departing completely from his earlier conviction that the public discourse of political themes were productive as elements of creative aspiration. His active political commitments had transmuted into meditations on the creative possibilities of republicanism, which found expression in his productiveness, independence of outlook, and lifestyle.¹⁵¹ For instance Linton was working on his press six weeks before his death (December 29 1897), setting up type for an anthology of his own verse entitled the Poor House Fugitive. Like Songs, Hymns and Objurgations by Spartacus, a collection he planned in 1895 with intentions to set the texts on his Appledore Press, the contents of the Poor House Fugitive span his career and are representative of the earlier interventionist aspects of his poetry. Both collections were in preparation stage at the time of his death (Fig. 15). However, as the late and final works of an engraver-printer-writer they demonstrate the continuity of his convictions in republican forms of society and the centrality of creativity in his own sense of self fulfilment.¹⁵² His work in old age was almost a practical demonstration of his idea of creative activity as an essential element of individual fulfilment.

¹⁵¹ W. J. Linton, 'An Artist's Habitat', Lippincott's Monthly Magazine (May 1895), 711-716.

¹⁵² Songs, Hymns and Objurgations by Spartacus 'For a single volume manuscript corrected and in order for the printer', Poor House Fugitive (incomplete printer's dummy 1897), Beinecke.

SONGS AND HYMNS
AND
OBJURGATIONS
BY
SPARTACUS
(W. L. LINTON)



W. L. LINTON

1895

Figure 15. Title page of Songs, Hymns and Objurgations by Spartacus (1895).

Chapter Two: 1833-1839

This chapter develops the account in Chapter One of the ways in which Linton's personal relationships and public commitments in the mid 1830s encouraged him to interpret literary culture as a function of republicanism rather than as a distinct or separate entity. The discussion explores the terms in which Linton understood creativity and culture at the beginning of his career as a writer. The process of unweaving the different strands making up this perception is intended to show the different ways in which Linton brought together his various influences in his writing.

In Memories Linton gave the 1839 periodical the National as his earliest publication, but he had previously made a few exploratory entries in the form of short articles and verse in periodicals and newspapers. These occasional pieces show the ways in which he brought together his influences. According to Smith, Linton had as early as 1833 written an article for Cobbett's Magazine. The 1836 Monthly Repository contains articles and verse by Linton. Prose and Verse gives an article dated 1836 'Co-operation' (printed in 1839), and 'Letters to the Working Classes', from the Weekly Chronicle, 1838. All of this material at some point brought in ideas of authorship and authorial purpose.

An 1833 article by Linton was ostensibly a review of an engraving of Correggio's 'Holy Family', but he used the article to state a case for the centrality of the engraver's skill in the process of graphic mass reproduction:

This 'Holy family' bears the name of [Samuel] Freeman as its engraver; but really is scarcely worthy of a Slave [. . .] Stippling and the line manner are mingled in its mode of execution; but mingled without principle, apparently by some person whose mind and hand, formed in conventional trammels, by and for a mercenary age, has probably no suspicion that the art which he nominally exercises, is, in its inherent capabilities, aught better than the merest of mechanic trade. All the energetic amenities of the master; all the characteristic squareness in the casting of his draperies [. . .] are superseded by a silly softness of texture, and unmeaning assemblage of forms.¹

Linton criticized 'Freeman's' engraving of the Correggio because it gave a misleading account of the original in the 'mingled' nature of the lines used. The review pointed out the irony of an engraver called Freeman adhering to 'conventional trammels' rather than working to adapt the line to the specific qualities of the painting in the manner of an engraver whose status as a creative presence rather than mechanical agent is implicit in the terms of Linton's criticism. Linton's understanding of the image was underpinned by his concept of the engraver as an active, creative participant in the transmission of the image. This idea of the engraver reflected the training Linton had received as an apprentice from Bonner in which he was closer to the style and outlook of the previous generation of artist-engravers than the mechanistic methods of the mid Victorian reproductive engravers. In addition to teaching the manual craft of preparing the materials for wood engraving Bonner encouraged his apprentices to cultivate a sense of taste as an essential adjunct to draughtsmanship and technical ability.² Linton thus learned that professional craftsmanship could be combined with a discriminating and critical sense of the designs he was engraving, or interpreting, into a mass-produced linear image. Linton's authoritative tone in this article was further justified by the dexterity of his early engraving. An engraving by Linton after Raphael dated 1833

¹ Cobbett's Magazine ed. by John Cobbett, 1833-34, this extract from Radical Artisan, p. 6.

² Memories, p. 8.

shows a fluent handling of the white-line technique at this point in his career and may therefore be used as an illustration or practical performance of the ideas put forward in the review (Figure 16). The style of the engraving in this early example of Linton's ability emphasises the potential for the medium to convey the impression of the freshness of a drawing through the studied spontaneity of the engraved lines.

However, the purpose for the Cobbett's Magazine review was not defined solely by creative motives. It shows that the adversarial stance seemed to come naturally to Linton. For the young Linton, the wood engraver was not merely a stage in the reproductive process but a creative element in the reproductive process, an interpreter who translated painterly qualities into linear terms. The term 'translation' pervaded the critical and technical writing on engraving in the 1830s and 40s, an analogy which indicated how the engraver's intelligence as well as technical skill were valued not only by engravers, publishers and commentators on the craft, but that a wider audience which appreciated the engraver's independent taste as well as the skill involved in the production of the image.³

The tone, purpose and viewpoint of this early article were echoed in the different contexts of Linton's subsequent verse and journalism. Apart from asserting the independence of the engraver's skill, Linton insisted in the review on the quality of line as a matter of the engraver bringing a sense of unity to the image in reproduction. As Linton's later writings on the engraved line show, the 'conventional' pact between engraver and viewer enabled an act of understanding close to reading in the emphasis on an informed appreciation of the craft of the medium as well as of content or subject. In addition to his technical expertise, the position of wood engraving as the primary form of mass reproduction in the 1830s emphasised Linton's awareness of the public aspects

³ C.f. William Andrew Chatto, 'The History of Wood-Engraving: Its History and Practice', Illustrated London News, April-July 1844.



Figure 16. W. J. Linton draughtsman and engraver, wood engraving 'after Raffaele' dated 1833.

of the engraver's craft as a process of creating publicly disseminated versions of unique paintings and images. This reinforced the value of advocating the status of the engraver as at once a vital link in the transmission of images and a creatively independent figure in this process. His increasing interest in the combination of public discourse and individual creativity made it natural for Linton to extend his awareness of the engraver as occupying a meditative position in relation to the transmission of culture into his view of himself as a writer. In the Correggio article he assumed the intention of speaking for a wider community: he set himself up as an informed individual voice arguing for a particular cause, in this case the independent status of the engraver as a skilled artisan in a profession closely related to the higher social rank of artists who were dependent on engravers for an audience beyond the exhibition hall.

Further openings for Linton's writing as the advocate of a cause were offered by his associations with W. J. Fox in the mid 1830s, leading to some writing being published in the Monthly Repository for 1836: a review of William Ellery Channing's pamphlet Slavery, an analysis of the Corn Laws, and some poems.⁴ Contributions to the Monthly Repository were printed anonymously. My discussion of these two articles is based on Smith's reference to them which gives correct references for the articles, but no verse appears in the Monthly Repository for his reference.⁵ The two sonnets in this discussion closely match Linton's style in the National, justifying my attribution of them to Linton. These poems hint at the anxieties about determinism, dualities and definitions, which emerge in the National sonnets:

⁴ Monthly Repository, 10 (1836), 193-203, 209-15, 433, 623. Further references to the Monthly Repository will be given as MR.

⁵ Radical Artisan, p. 23n.

That Loveliness and Tyranny should be
 Sisters in this strange world! Caprice and Power,
 And Wisdom and Infirmary, each hour
 The ofttest-coupled things we meet and see!
 Hath Tyrant-Beauty, then, the tyrant's plea-
 Eve's and the Serpent's everlasting dower?
 Is't of necessity we quail and cower,
 Before these starry despots, heart and knee? (ll. 1-8)⁶

The article 'Channing on Slavery' is concerned as much with authorial purpose as with the specific qualities of the work under review. The parts of Channing's article that Linton praised most were those that recalled the rhythms of the King James bible in lending a prophetic tone to the argument. Linton gives Channing's 'broad and abstract' approach to the theme of the abolition of slavery in America as a strength: 'We rejoice in his having discussed the great question of slavery in reference to universal and enduring principles, rather than connexion with local and temporary circumstances'.⁷ Instead, Channing's argument operates on the level of principles: 'There is no getting up of pathetic or horrible stories. There are no carefully worked calculations, with the results in dollars or cents [. . .] It proceeds on the assumption of there being other realities in the world besides pounds, shillings and pence'.⁸ Linton anticipates the possible contemporary objections to Channing's approach which 'scarcely finds more favour with many Reformers than with Conservatives. They reckon argument of this description as bad as poetry [. . .] These worshippers in the outer court of the Utilitarian temple have so blocked up the portal as to make some folks believe, and Dr. Channing among them, in the non-existence of any inner sanctuary'.⁹ Linton reads Channing's argument as proceeding from the 'broadest and most undeniable premises',

⁶ *MR* 10, p. 623.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 195.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 194.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 194.

namely the 'sacred and infallible' rights of man, but detected a utilitarian prejudice in the development of them, in the sense that Channing identified 'inward and moral' with 'outward' good in arguing that slavery ran against the 'General Good'.¹⁰ The conclusion of Linton's review, apart from lamenting the presence of slavery within a republican nation state, shifts the reader's attention momentarily away from Channing's starting point to the condition of modern society, relating the 'sacred and infallible' to the particularity of contemporary events without modification of these enduring principles.

The relation of 'enduring principles' to a contemporary theme preoccupied Linton's writing in the late 1830s, and determined the forms in which he chose to work. A two-hundred line poem 'The Incendiary's Grave', written in 1837 and published in the National, was intended for the Monthly Repository. Influenced by Wordsworth, the poem works within the premise of poetic speaker as witness of social injustice, a common theme of the verse printed in the Monthly Repository over 1836-37. The poem records a characteristic feature of Linton's verse writing in the 1830s and 40s: just as the themes are diffuse, so the verse is carefully constructed. This disparity was possibly the consequence of Linton's attempt to weld lyric expression to social concern, in this case the irreversibility of a miscarriage of justice that entails capital punishment. The poem is a representative performance of Linton's writing in the late 1830s in its attempt to combine metrical fluency, elements of imitation from contemporary culture and the public purpose of the speaker's observations.

The speaker in 'The Incendiary's Grave', his 'vagrant curiosity' caught by an unmarked grave stone, is provoked into reconstructing the story of a discharged soldier tried for murder on circumstantial evidence and sentenced to death.

¹⁰ MR, 10, p. 196.

The first verse of the poem shows the extent of Linton's control over his material because it signals what kind of response it intends:

It is an unhewn stone,
 By feet of passing hours worn smooth;
 And grey with age, save where o'ergrown,
 Like stagnant pool, with slimy weed,
 Pale, sickly green as festering wound:
 Footstool fit to serve the need
 Of Death in the dark charnel throned;
 Corruption's fitter couch; if sooth
 The peasant's tale, this shapeless thing of woe
 Is truest epitaph o'er one below. (ll. 1-10)¹¹

In figuring the 'unhewn stone' as at once an anonymous marker and the sign of particular narrative, the speaker establishes the framework of the poem as an attempt to detect the truth in the interplay between the particular and the universal. The stone is a type, the sign of a particular individual and an enduring emblem of capital punishment misapplied. The monument is a 'Truest epitaph' in its unobtrusive, weathered form because its outward appearance corresponds with the 'shapeless thing of woe' it stands in for, acting as an emblem of the criminal's representative status in the poem. The event is located in the distant past which is reachable through orally transmitted form as the 'peasant's tale', but this local narrative requires an act of 'fancy' to elicit the details and moral ramifications of the events. In the opening of the poem the potential meaning of the narrative persists into the present not only through the association of the present tense with the grave, but in the curiosity evoked by its plainness, and in the description that creates a sense of continuity in relation to the process of decay where the absence of auxiliary verbs emphasises a sense of persistence. The fragmentation of identity over time and its reconstruction in poetic narrative, stimulated by a physical marker, was an elegiac theme deriving from Wordsworth.

¹¹ Text from the National, p. 317.

The speaker's meditation on the grave stone, which leads him into the story and its social ramifications, uses the topos as a way of insisting on the persistence of the individual's specific circumstances as representative of broader shortcomings of capital punishment, and as an appeal for reflection. This outlook sets the poem's tone of authoritative statement which is further reinforced by the solitary voice of the speaker whose appeal to reason is implicit in the miscarriage of justice that results from partial legislation. The monumental idea of the opening is developed in the description of the church in which the grave is located:

It standeth in its strength, the abode
Of the Eternal, o'er decay
Triumphant, as a God serene:
Its pallid features wrinkled by long time,
Still wear the harmony of youthful prime (ll. 16-20)

Architectural permanence as an emblem of religious harmony suggests that the broader ideas of Christianity were for Linton a social ideal in the changing modern community, but transience and power are linked in the description of the heraldic symbols on the façade of the church. The description implies criticism on several levels: the heraldic images that are such prominent features of the church are 'rudely sculptured' 'relics' which, as types, accurately reflect the 'selfish craft' of feudal patronage. They also illustrate the interdependency of formal worship and institutional power. However, the terms of the speaker's observations indicate that time has lent perspective to the power structures of the feudal system.

The statuary on the church, designed to be read as a lasting reminder of power, continues the idea of meaning persisting through time:

Upon the ivied tower
 Three rudely sculptured bears are placed
 Quaint relics of the Gothic hour,
 Strange saints for Christian edifice!
 Perchance the founder's crest, whose pride
 Soar'd o'er God's altar; or device
 Of satire to deep scorn allied,
 Upon the selfish craft that based
 That holy shrine—types of the ravenous brood,
 Cold, sluggish things, devoid of gratitude (ll. 21-30)

The heraldic monuments are not only incongruous in their ecclesiastical context, but they contrast with the description of the church in the terms of pictorial idealism and harmony.

Literal and figurative ideas of position are encouraged by the gradual descriptive tour of the locality, an approach that Linton derived from the tradition of graveyard poetry, which takes a pastoral setting as a stage for wider concerns about society, particularly in the stone as 'an enduring record' of a specific set of circumstances. While the journey through the church yard reflects Linton's cultural influences it also indicates a creative level of engagement with antecedent.

As the narrative unfolds it becomes apparent that Linton has invented the crime to reflect the broader characteristics of the judicial system rather than of a particular set of events. In this way the poem creates its own terms of reference and side steps the connotations of the term 'incendiary' for an 1830s audience. This generality is matched by the poem's formality of expression since the events when seen are viewed indirectly through the recollection of the 'peasant's tale'. The poem acknowledges this feature internally in the view of the crime which is revealed through the speaker's visionary insight which tries to find the truth behind particular experience. The balance between a particular cause, the requirements of verbal flexibility and a personal creative search for a voice remained problematic in Linton's verse writing, and was only

resolved in the later poems where the public address and social relevance were no longer central to the process of writing. In 'The Incendiary's Grave' the speaker's mode of address is uncertain in that his 'vagrant curiosity' seems more like a monologue accidentally over heard than a public statement of humanitarian concern growing out of the emotions of direct experience:

Oft at the churchyard gate,
 Scanning that unhewn stone thereby
 Paused we to muse upon the fate
 Of him to whom that brand of shame
 And wordless epitaph had given
 The interest of a mighty name,
 A mystery that must be riven
 By vagrant Curiosity—
 Who, heedless of the letter'd tomb, will stare
 At that strange monument:- "Who lieth there?" (ll. 51-60)

The end of the poem returns to the first verse by re-introducing the monument topos:

It is an unhewn stone!
 Yon graven memories shall dissolve;
 Yon monuments be overthrown;
 Yea! Even that ancient sanctuary
 Be levell'd, and rank herbage hide
 The dust of its strong masonry:
 Yet shall that lonely tomb abide,
 And future doubts and dreams involve:-
 The enduring record of deed of blood,
 From human law appealing unto God (ll. 191-200)

The generic design of the tomb signifies the generality of the poem's message but the 'unhewn' simplicity of the design guarantees the survival of the gravestone and its story as an 'enduring record' when time has 'levelled' the more elaborate 'graven' monuments. The survival of the stone as a 'record' is substantiated by its continuance in the contemplative inwardness that is stimulated by it. Crucial to this reading is the poem's use of the idea that the stone remains but, more importantly, that it stimulates a

continuing process of reflection: ‘ Yet shall that lonely tomb abide, / And future doubts and dreams involve’. The conceptual and visual connotations of ‘involve’ convey the idea that the speaker, and by implication the reader, are entangled or implicated in responsibility for others. The placing of the word at the end of the line reinforces the suggestion that the process of reflection lives on in the speaker’s consciousness.

Linton seemed more interested in the sound and structure of the language than the emotional dimension of the events told, and this feature of the poem is apparent in the fact that the spoken voice is central to the narrative in several ways, but remains formal and metrical, patterned in a way that maintains its distance from the events described. The speaker’s self-reference in the fifth verse opens up the singular perspective only after the first four have established his authoritative position as an observer in full command of the relationship between past and present in the setting through the extended topographical description. The speaker therefore keeps a distance from the condemned in the act of formalising the account.

The claim for social relevance is made on an authorial assumption of the justness of the theme rather than on a personal imagination and exploration of the emotions. The sympathy derives from the authority of the speaker’s narrative, rather than through a description of the condemned man’s personal qualities. The speaker seems to reflect Linton’s concept of authorial voice: close to or parallel with the aftermath of an injustice, possessing a structure within which he can interpret and describe the event, but preserving a sense of distance from the event itself. This may indicate Linton’s uncertainty about the validity of his personal perceptions in a public context. The information about the crime in the vision only creates sympathy because we are told of a miscarriage of justice.

The theme of injustice in the poem is connected to Linton's journalistic concerns in 1838-39, but the lyrical-picturesque elements of the poem do not represent conservative acquiescence to literary authority. The speaker's constructed qualities suggest to an attentive reader the kind of response that the poem intends, a response related not only to the topos of the monument as the stimulus for moral reflection by a solitary speaker, but to the cultural status of the topos in the context of the liberal tradition of poetry as the expression of natural liberties. Linton's poem is essentially Wordsworthian in the sense that the description of the stone as an 'enduring record' grows out of the persistence of the story in the poetic speaker's recollection and inward reflection on the past. The inherence of meaning within an act of reflection in Linton's poem is similar to the speaker's meditations in 'Resolution and Independence'. Furthermore, as a set of private reflections on society in which the speaker figures as a receptive but passive witness of contemporary 'problems', 'The Incendiary's Grave' is not only influenced by the Wordsworthian social vision of poems such as 'The Ruined Cottage' and 'The Discharged Soldier', but Linton's poem expected its readers to recognise the Wordsworthian handling of the themes as well as encouraging a response that was aware of the tradition of the topos. This would explain the feeling that the poet is distanced from the events described; Linton was taking his ideas from reading experience rather than his own, expecting his readers to respond to familiar patterns of representation. In this way Linton expected the poem to be read within the wider context of dominant poetic traditions such as the picturesque and the monument topos. Linton had indicated his early admiration for and debt to Wordsworth in an 1876 poem 'From England to America', but later admitted disappointment when heard of Wordsworth's angry response to Frost's reprieve from Margaret Gillies.¹² Other echoes of Wordsworth's sonnets in the National poems discussed later in this chapter suggest

¹² Memories, p. 167.

that Linton was not only aware of the influence but that he was in the 1830s seeking for creative ways of using it. Despite the political viewpoint, the constructed nature of the speaker as a cultured and educated figure sets him within liberal culture. This conception of the poetic speaker is aligned with the socially conscious yet vatic figure of Tennyson's 'poet' lyrics of the 1830s. Implicitly and explicitly, in outlook and style and purpose, Linton as an author maintained a conservative position.

'The Incendiary's Grave' was Linton's earliest articulation of the themes that would preoccupy him in the 1860s and 70s: the persistence of meaning, and the presence of his past as a burden to be explored and resolved through verse.

The persona Linton adopted in his 1838 Weekly Chronicle 'Letters to the Working Classes,' shows another facet of his early forays into publication. In the 1830s the form of article in which 'letters' were given as advice to the readership was the province of the experienced observer with established authority.¹³ In them Linton, as 'One of the People', sought to create a sense of affinity with the group he addressed as 'the people', a group that he defined in the article as the unenfranchised 'remainder' excluded after the franchise settlement of 1832: 'we have ever experienced-one-sided legislation [. . .] We have been deceived by the Reform Bill [. . .] a man who is not enfranchised is a slave'. Linton counters his direct relation of slavery to political condition and status by presenting an argument that the potential for government existed within the community in the form of elected 'delegates who shall perform the functions of a legislature'. Liberty in this context is a matter of self-determination: 'to be free, it is but necessary that we desire it earnestly'. The criticisms in second letter are based on extracts from parliamentary proceedings 'taken at random'. As an example of class partiality and 'systematic injustice' he instances particular contrasts between the

¹³ Cooper Life, p. 149.



published actions and sentences of violent ‘gentlemen’ with ‘the Dorchester labourers’. The liberal press also came in for criticism: ‘Even those [newspapers] called liberal-the Spectator, the Examiner, the Dispatch-(in last Sunday’s number the Dispatch attacks the very principle of the people’s charter),-the Bell’s New Weekly Messenger, are the organs of the middle classes, your oppressors [. . .] What the abused would call moderate reform, they (the abusers) would call revolution; hoping to frighten you with a word’.¹⁴ For Linton legislation represented and maintained the type of continuity that more conservative members of the artisan class feared would be swept away by revolutionary acts. In the letter he argued that government by the people was an apparent discontinuity, and he would spend the next decade working out ways to resolve the conceptual demands and tensions within and between Chartist and republican notions of national government. In these letters and in his later journalism Linton employs the ‘local and temporary’ details that he had dismissed as inadequate in 1837, but this shift may reflect his developing awareness that pragmatism did not entail surrender to utilitarianism.

In these early pieces the different sides of Linton’s creative aspiration and public discourse were articulated as isolated elements. He brought them together as the themes in and the motivations for his first periodical the National. Priced at two pence (the average price of a plain pamphlet in 1839), printed and issued weekly by Watson from his shop, it ran from January 5 1839 until Linton’s funds ran out on June 26, completing a single volume of 26 illustrated numbers. The experiment was financially unsuccessful, but for the next ten years Linton valued the periodical as the product of his efforts in writing a significant proportion of the material, and as the result of his individual researches in the British Museum library during 1838.

¹⁴ P and V, vol. 1, p. 42, 43, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48.

In his 'Introduction' for the first number Linton, as editor, expressed his intention to assist 'the Unmonied in their pursuit of knowledge [. . .] by presenting to them, at a price within reach of all [. . .] thoughts and opinions of the noblest spirits of the world [. . .] history, political and theological criticisms, and Reviews of literature and art'. He dwelt on this aspect of his intentions forty years later: 'In 1838 I was projecting what I hoped might become a sort of cheap library for the people: to consist mainly of selected extracts from such prohibited works as were beyond the purchasing-reach or time for study of working men'.¹⁵ This blend of utilitarian values, artisan self-improvement, and intended appeal to a mass audience was typical of the 'cheap knowledge' concerns of the mid 1830s that underpinned the movement to remove stamp duty from cheap periodical publications and newspapers, later called the 'war of the unstamped', a movement in which Linton's publisher and inspirational friend James Watson, and associate Henry Hetherington, had been central figures. Linton described the campaign in Memories as evidence of the success of moral force resistance to oppressive governmental interference with free speech, enacted by individuals, arguing that by prosecuting publishers and distributors of 'unstamped' papers, governmental policy in the 1830s had been forced into a reactionary position, thus furthering his consistent commitment to an idea of associative action as active and successful intervention rather than a utopian ideal.¹⁶ Linton's understanding of the unstamped campaign as individual acts, accumulating towards an inevitable outcome, was substantiated by fact that it was carried out through instances of personal integrity that led to changes in legislation.

The historian of the movement to repeal newspaper stamp duty, Joel H. Wiener, argued that the pragmatic, immediate aims of the publishers of unstamped papers like

¹⁵ James Watson, p. 59

¹⁶ James Watson, p. 27

Hetherington's the Poor Man's Guardian not only answered the needs of educated and self-taught artisans in the mid 1830s, but that the themes of the free press movement evolved alongside the traditional themes of indigenous radicalism as they developed with, and into, the elements of Chartism in the late 1830s:

The statements of these obscure "victims" of the newspaper prosecutions help to illuminate a major motivation behind the working-class movement for repeal, namely, the passionate determination to attain "cheap knowledge" [. . .] These phrases, and others of a similar nature, became shibboleths during the newspaper agitation. On the one hand, such slogans had roots in a concrete series of changes that were broadening the intellectual horizons of the uneducated masses. But they also came to symbolise and articulate a course of ill - defined grievances; in this capacity, they provided a symbolic dimension to the newspaper agitation that gave it a significance beyond its immediate scope.¹⁷

Wiener's observation about the movement's capacity to combine imagination of institutional change, intellectual aspiration and responsiveness to the 'concrete' changes in the patterns of literacy matches Linton's intentions for and his writing in the National. The preface of the National and the inclusion of the periodical in Watson's 1840 catalogue placed the periodical in existing body of 'cheap knowledge'.¹⁸ As well as publishing contemporary material like the National, Watson was renowned for his cheap well-produced reprints of literary works, which were intended to serve the market of urban artisan class self-improvement. Linton was one of the working class radicals who projected the specific aims of the newspaper stamp repeal movement beyond the arena of party politics and into a realisation of the People's Charter.¹⁹ He realised that, by 1839, the 'war of the unstamped' was effectively over, and that the ground of popular and middle class interest was shifting in the direction of Chartism. The purpose

¹⁷ The War of the Unstamped (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 117. Further references will be given as Wiener.

¹⁸ Catalogue of Watson's publications, reprinted in James Watson.

¹⁹ Wiener, p. 119.

and some aspects of the programme of the National may be identified with the broad outlines of the unstamped campaign, yet the majority of Linton's contributions worked within the emerging discourse of Chartism. He understood that the organisational methods, aspirations and iconography of the free press agitation continued to be relevant elements to the Chartists oriented programme of reform, and printed Ebenezer Elliott's 'The Press'.²⁰ The periodical was thus related to the free press movement on one side, but Linton's idea for the periodical emerged from an attempt to unite different strands of the reform discourse: conservative radical politics, self-improvement and a liberal view of literary heritage.

In addition Linton brought into the periodical the diversity of themes and forms of expression that characterise his work as a writer. Indeed, his term 'cheap library' described only one aspect of the National as a periodical publication. It represented a creative marker in his writing career, in the sense that it combined the forms of fable, verse, argument and extracted material that he was to integrate into his journalism over the 1840s. As a synthesis of pamphlet, periodical, and 'penny library', the structure of the National allowed Linton to render in concrete form the model of society he had developed in the early 1840s before Mazzini's influence confirmed its outlines: diverse voices, existing together but given equal recognition of their capacity to fulfil their inherent potential as expressions of human liberty. The programme of the National was therefore inclusive enough to accommodate ideas and authors who wrote with radical or reformist intentions, such as Godwin and Paine, and works written by established authors like Wordsworth and Milton that could have been read in 1839 with a partisan bias as anticipations of moderate Chartism. Each issue of the National was based on a single theme which was illustrated by literary extracts, and elucidated by articles and verse written by Linton. This structure created the opportunity for Linton's writing to

²⁰ National, p. 31.

rub shoulders with the established statements of liberty, such as Wordsworth's sonnets, reprinted in 1838, and the lesser known prose works by Milton.

Situated between pamphlet and periodical, the National combined the qualities of both. As a pamphlet it utilised the form's tradition as a singular voice expressing strong convictions. Linton was aware that pamphlet writing had an established place in the history of dissent, and knew his precedents, such as Winstanley's narrative of the 'Norman yoke'. It resembled a periodical publication in the contemporaneity of the extracts from modern poetry, drama, and journalism. The National shared the political programme of the Monthly Repository, which also influenced Linton's literary bias on individual cultural development, defined by personal discovery rather than a contact with literature 'dulled by verbal familiarity which anticipates appreciation'.²¹ The literary heritage is represented by extracts from recent and established writers, and contemporary oratory. For a modern reader, the polyphonic texture of the periodical can create dynamic effects in its contrasts and juxtapositions.

The material of each issue was organised to reflect a central theme, summarised by the cover image. The parallels between the image and the theme of each issue of the National assumed a fair degree of sophistication on the part of the reader, as Linton's 'Introduction' recognised:

Our choice of illustration will be directed by the same desire of advantaging the community, having ever reference to our one great object, moral and intellectual improvement. We are of opinion that to accustom the eye to the study of beauty is one way, and no inconsiderable way, of ennobling and beautifying the mind. 'The mind becomes that which it contemplates.' We therefore intend that every illustration shall bear the impress of Beauty and convey some useful lesson.²²

²¹ MR 10, p. 8

²² National, p. 3.

In addition to the unifying effect of the graphic images, Linton's own sequences of linked poems thread through the full run of the National, acting as a compact articulation of the theme in each part, giving a further feeling of unity to the periodical. Two separate sequences, the twelve 'Hymns for the Unenfranchised', and the 'Revelations of Truth', alternate with sonnets. Linton's relation of his verse to the theme of each issue, and the way in which he used his verse writing, illustrates his attempt to unite his creative aspiration as lyric poet, with the public roles of editor and journalist.

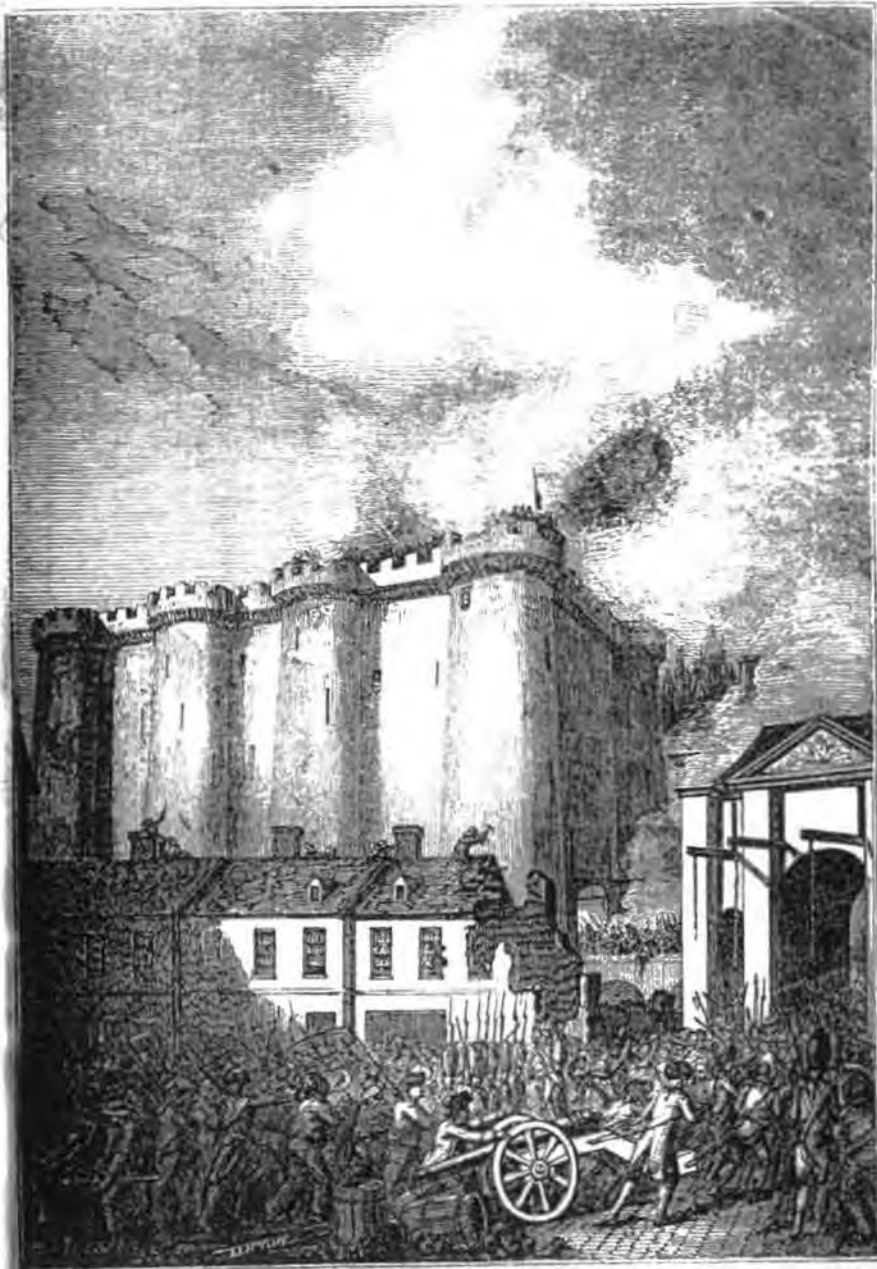
The diversity of the material in the National and its presentation allowed readers to reflect on the kind of culture that might be constructed or preserved in parallel with the political changes Linton was advocating. The combination of different forms in Linton's verse and in the extracts creates an interplay, particularly where there is a strong unifying thread running through the image and the material of a particular number of the periodical, where each element reinforces a central theme. The January issue for example opens with an image 'The Storming of the Bastille' (Figure 17).

The contents in this issue cluster around the concept of society as the abrasive interaction of unnecessarily inimical layers. For instance, in the article 'Popular Fitness for Freedom', the moral points to the deferral of universal rights in terms that reaffirm the value of maintaining a dialogue between the compartments of modern society:

Answer [. . .] to the demand of an awakened Nation...when and how you were made superior to your fellow men [. . .] Your answer, your superior fitness. Prove it! We, the majority, deny it [. . .] Is it necessary, too, that we should prove our capability of right reasoning...before we shall be allowed by the judgement of self-throned despotism to speak or to argue? [. . .] If, therefore, instead of violently enforcing the restitution of those natural rights of which by force or fraud of tyrannic custom we have been so long deprived, we hesitate not to expostulate with tyranny, calmly arguing for the rationality and justice of our claims, it is not that

THE NATIONAL,

A JOURNAL FOR THE PEOPLE.



STORMING OF THE BASTILLE,
July 14, 1789

Figure 17. W. J. Linton (and Henry Linton), engraver and draughtsman, 'Storming of the Bastille', from the National (1839).

we allow the right of the usurper to sit in judgement [. . .] but that we would discountenance all appeals to brute force.²³

This line of argument presupposes that the reader has understood the significance, the historical implications and moral lessons of revolution as a political act with ramifications beyond the control of the participants, and is offering a response to the conditions that made the French Revolution possible. Linton conceived of poetry, narrative, journalism and the graphic image as forms of communicating this moral force message.

The central themes and guiding assumptions that shaped Linton's language and choice of subjects originated from an existing background of enlightenment dissent. The particular influences that recur through the National are William Godwin's Political Justice (1793) and Paine's The Rights of Man (1791). In the National the language of late eighteenth century radicalism came into contact with the culture available to early Victorian artisans. Indeed, the term 'national' and its suggestion of unity is central in Paine's account of the French Revolution in the Rights of Man. Linton was hoping to rejuvenate these revolutionary concepts and, in the attempt, to create a unity from the materials he gathered. This showed his intended role as an informed mediator of a tradition of articulate political dissent. The terms in which Linton rationalised his anti-monarchism may be traced to the Rights of Man, an influence that carried further ramifications for the way he thought about language. Paine's concrete descriptions of historical events and his tendency to cast abstract notions such as tolerance, intolerance, ignorance and reason into concrete terms formed part of his project to open up the perceived binary oppositions governing society, for instance the repeated trope of labour and capital as a slave / master relationship. Paine's definitions of reform and natural

²³ National, p. 40.

rights contributed to Linton's sense of authorship as a synthesis of private and public purposes and therefore conditioned the way he used verse in the National as an element of rationalist discourse. The concept of natural rights in Linton's writing is always related to the individual's capacity to make reasoned conclusions rather than assent to dogma. Paine articulated his mode of interpreting society through a model of social reality as a dramatic show which only retains its credibility as long as the 'audience' colludes with the illusion of stability and inevitability in the prevailing order:

But there is a truth that ought to be made known [...] *that, notwithstanding appearances, there is not any description of men that despise monarchy so much as courtiers.* But they well know, that if it were seen by others, as it is seen by them, the juggle could not be kept up. They are in the condition of men who get their living by a show, and to whom the folly of that show is so familiar that they ridicule it; but were the audience to be made as wise, in this respect, as themselves, there would be an end to the show and the profits with it. The difference between a Republican and a courtier with respect to monarchy is, that the one opposes monarchy believing it to be something, and the other laughs at it knowing it to be nothing.²⁴

The final sentence is tellingly balanced in its opposition; 'knowing' is given a negative connotation in its relationship to monarchy, an evaluation encouraged by the unexpected terms of the contrast with the republican who is convinced that monarchy is more important than his discursive mirror image, the courtier, will allow. In Paine's argument the 'show' of monarchical government, a term strongly related to the French Revolution, would collapse once the 'audience' was aware of its inner mechanisms. In the extract 'belief' is a form of knowledge relying on a prior understanding of what a particular social category represents, in the case of monarchy and, by implication, all forms of traditional authority as a rational location of how and where this authority was established. The use of 'belief' denotes strength of conviction. Paine conceived of the

²⁴ The Rights of Man Part I, (1791), facsimile ed. by Johnathan Wordsworth (Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1992), pp. 82-3

post-Revolutionary social order as nothing other than a mutable presentation in which knowledge could act as a cumulative progress towards truth.

Linton interpreted the means of making men 'wise' to this theatrical relationship between themselves and authority as a process of self-conscious application and understanding of knowledge, since the 'Republican [. . .] opposes monarchy believing it to be something'. Essential to this 'belief' was an awareness and knowledge of the object as a crucial matter for 'rational' debate. Linton picked up on Paine's insistence that monarchy be taken and criticised as an existing social reality with reference to the equal validity of other forms of government. In his authorial role Linton saw the potential to render visible the mechanisms of the stage through the act of presenting disparate materials located at different points on a historical continuity, related to each other by their shared concern with individual liberty. In this way Linton was attempting to allow readers to discover through reading a personal way of understanding the modes of deception operating on the 'People'. Like the model of the observer in 'The Incendiary's Grave', Linton felt that his distance from suffering, and his awareness of culture, had the capacity to unite the competing perspectives on political reform.

While Linton's writing in the National implicitly acknowledged that creativity was a personal and solitary act, this did not preclude the integration of the individual voice of lyric verse with public commitment and its attendant discourses. The interdependence in the National of extracted material and Linton's contributions is resonant with ideas of creativity shared by working and middle class concepts of reform. In relation to working class culture Janowitz's discussion of the framework within which Linton worked has emphasised the functions of verse writing in the development of self and community in the late 1830s. This is a valid approach, given the renewal in 1839-40 of the radical tradition of verse which settled into conventions

and expectations established earlier in the 1830s. The language of a series of articles in the 1838 New Moral World may have influenced Linton's statements of intent in the National. Written at the same time as Linton's early articles for the National, these articles show how the rhetorical elements of poetry were valued equally with verbal expression: poetry is at its most 'powerful' when 'philosophy is combined [. . .] with fancy [. . .] A love of the true and beautiful, can be best excited by making the human mind familiar with those lofty aspirations after good – those burning pages of many of our modern poets'.²⁵ Another direct point of comparison with the public purposes of the verse writing in the National is the series 'The Politics of Poets' from the Chartist Circular, a periodical in which Linton's work was reprinted. The sixth article in the series grants poetry the potential to reflect popular will, and to intervene on behalf of the people:

Poetry [. . .] penetrates to every nerve and fibre of society, stirring into irresistibility its undermost currents, and spiriting into life and activity the obscurest dweller of the valley, as well as swaying the insignia of its power amongst the loftiest altitudes of genius [. . .] Statesmen would do well to feel the throb thus swelling from the pent-up breast of society. It matters, little, however rude the strain; like the feather, it tells the way the wind blows. It points the dial hand of time with unerring certainty to a coming period, when a deep and sweeping change must take place in all our institutions. Ever since the French Revolution mere sentiment in poetry has been giving way for that principle. The times in which we live demand the exercise of the sterner faculties. Around, despotism deepens its gloom; the lights of fancy alone are inadequate to struggle with its darkness. Poetry needed, and received, a higher and firmer tone; if it has lost in feeling, it has gained in power.²⁶

In its combination of Shelleyan poetics and utilitarianism, modern poetry is conceived of as indicating an inner 'throb thus swelling from the pent-up breast of society' which reflects an external democratic influence uniting all levels of society. The millenarian terminology has a tendency towards 'progress', a term betraying the

²⁵ New Moral World, 1 December 1838, p. 83.

²⁶ Chartist Circular, 24 October 1840.

self-conscious utilitarian bias in figuring literary discourse as one of the possible means of social change and enlightenment. It was partly up to writers like Linton to maintain a lively element of allusion and a creative aspiration towards verbal achievement in the relationship of literary discourse to theories of political change.

Linton shared the emphasis on ‘tone’ and ‘power’ in foregrounding a concept of change articulated in his verse writing, but he consistently represents this change as symbolic or inward rather than observed event. The twelve poems comprising the ‘Hymns for the Unenfranchised’ give the condition of England theme from the perspective of an active reformer from the artisan class in 1839, a crucial year for moderate Chartism. Social realism is not, however, the emphasis in the ‘Hymns’. They attempted to render modern concerns in communal song as variations on the themes of social definition against a background of history as a series of dispossessions continued into the modern period with the effects of the New Poor Law. The ‘Hymns’ integrate elements of radical history in the form of allusions to Peterloo, references from Cobbett’s writings on rural poverty, and use of the slavery analogy prevalent in governmental criticisms through the 1830s. These themes are carried by a sparse style which has its closest parallel with Ebenezer Elliott but, as Vicinus pointed out, the demands on the reader were far in advance of most material intended for a working class audience.²⁷ The ‘Hymns’ anticipated Linton’s working out of a model of community through sequence in his 1849 ‘Rhymes and Reasons’, but unlike the later sequence, the ‘Hymns’ must be read both in the context of the sequence, and in the context of the periodical. Incomplete as individual poems, they represent stages in a single line of argument that reflects the central themes and structures of the National.

²⁷ Vicinus, pp. 99-100.

The idea of the hymn form is used by Linton to invoke collective action, and this is matched by the collective voice in which the speaker identifies himself with the group maintaining plural self reference throughout the sequence. As a sequence the twelve poems create a sense of a dialogue in which competing notions of human value exist in the same space. Instead of interacting, the different concepts of human value in the sequence cut across each other. The shape of the 'Hymns' as a sequence therefore reflects a perception, shared with other writers in the radical community, of the social order as a group of institutions unresponsive to collective need. Parliament in particular was criticised by Chartists and Anti Corn Law supporters as failing to recognise popular will.

The 'Hymns' begin with a bold rhetorical gesture which encapsulates the concerns and language of all twelve poems in the sequence:

Who is the Patriot, who is he,
When slaves are struggling to be free,
Freedom's best-beloved, may claim
To bear her holiest Oriflamb?

He who joineth hands with Power,
When the anarch would devour
Trampled Right insurgent?-He
Is no friend of Liberty.

He who claimeth kin with Right
Perfumed or in ermine dight,
Knowing not the "rabble"?-He
Hateth Truth and Liberty (I, ll. 1-12)²⁸

The combination of public purpose and ballad form is problematic in this 'Hymn'. The momentum of the opening is dispersed after the first two lines because the removal of pronouns produces a syntax too convoluted to be supported by the compression of the verse form. In the same way, the shape and fluency of the ballad

²⁸ National, p.51.

form are undermined by the complexity of the message. The poem proceeds from a line of inquiry that informs the whole periodical, and which continues through the 'Hymns', taking the form of a question-response structure. Taken in isolation the questions seem to suggest that the poems as a sequence represent a search for concrete definitions of these terms. The initial question of 'Hymn' I receives a concrete response in the penultimate verse:

He who through distress and scorn
Freedom's Cross hath grandly borne,
The Uncompromising,- he shall be
The banner-man of Liberty. (ll. 17-20)

In this response it is apparent that the definitions have been established prior to the act of writing the verse. The 'Hymns' work around these definitions rather than set out to explore the possible meanings of 'slave', 'master' and 'liberty'. Linton's rhetorical purpose is apparent in this foreordination of the central terms. In this sense the 'Hymns' are political devices which articulate ideas by means of categories, patriotism, slavery, the definitions of which have been established prior to his writing of the poems. While the poem works around these established ideas or categories it relates itself to the contemporary world. Like 'The Incendiary's Grave', 'Hymn' I echoes Wordsworth, in this case one of his meditations on liberty, 'The Character of the Happy Warrior', in which a balance of action and domestic stability is presented as an ideal.

The opening line of 'Hymn' I is mirrored in the penultimate poem in the sequence which shows how the stability of the underlying definitions articulated in the poems leads to balance:

Who is the Slave? — Though life-long chains,
 And a dungeon atmosphere of pains
 And toil and shame and ceaseless stir-
 The yoke of another's monstrous gains-
 He is no slave; his unconquer'd thought
 Trampleth his "master" underfoot. (XI, ll. 1- 7)²⁹

The symmetry of the opening lines derives from the stability of the definitions which, since they have been established in advance, unify the whole sequence. 'Hymn' XI illustrates the disadvantages of founding the creative act on this basis. In the idea of oppression the suggestion of equivalence between economic exploitation and physical suffering limits the poem's capacity to generate insight into or encourage exploration of oppression as a political or emotional reality. However, the movement of the poem causes a modification of this concept, undermining the initial sense of certainty and stability. Linton puts forward an idea in the National of the process of acquiring knowledge as a liberating concept, and this is condensed in XI: 'He is no slave; his unconquer'd thought / Trampleth his "master" underfoot.' The poem makes a claim for self awareness as a form of inner resistance to social conventions that undermined confidence in innate human value: the 'masters' claim only a portion of the subject's existence, namely the physical attributes of suffering, the perceived categories of slave and master are thus rendered modifiable through the vision created by verse. The poem suggests that the only way forward is to reform the outlook of *both* rather than one, or to discard such categories altogether, although Linton's verse in the National never follows this line of thought to any conclusions other than those held out by a society founded on the founding principles of his political commitments. Throughout the 'Hymns' it is apparent that Linton understood the language of slavery as a rhetorical trope which had contact points with the experiences of the artisan audience. There is very much the feeling that Linton was adapting a commonly understood idiom to

²⁹ National, p. 355.

address those groups which would accept these terms as analogues of urban experience. Mutual exploitation based on power is unproductive, and Linton's message throughout the National is that revolutionary conflict can only lead to cyclic patterns, since the poem argues that 'He is a slave-whose uncurb'd Wrath / Draggeth him out of the even path', but the idea of 'unconquer'd thought' reinforces the value of inward resistance. The whole of the National suggests that inner experience is not the only form of resistance to what the liberal perspective deemed oppression. The poem holds up the inner experience of change as desirable. Ultimately however the inflexibility of the form is unsuitable for the enactment of its theory.

The opening questions of I and XI have the effect of setting the unenfranchised community into a longer perspective by invoking the history of labour and its definitions in the figure of 'the Slave'. The interrelation of poetry and prose arguments hinges on these notions of humanity, one of the defining terms of the abolitionist movement in America. In the 'Hymns' the literal and metaphorical elements converge, lending strength to the breadth of appeal in the language of slavery. The terminology of slavery would have also reminded readers of the transference of anti-slavery terms into the factory movement in the early 1830s. However, this makes the 'Hymns' hard-edged, lacking an element of a personal search for the characteristics of their central concepts such as liberty.

Linton showed a need to substantiate the claims of both personal aspiration and the broader concepts by transferring his arguments into the song form. This renders conviction through metrical regularity and renders the hardships as an aspect of universal struggle. Throughout the 'Hymns' there are echoes of Cobbett's Legacy to Labourers (1834), quoted throughout the National, and other anti-Malthusian witnesses of rural and urban change. The images and situations presented by Cobbett acted in the

manner of iconography for Linton, and the fact that he derived his accounts of rural hardship from textual authorities rather than direct experience led his verse to concentrate on effects of hardship rather than the processes that produced it, an emphasis underlined by the public purpose of the verse. However, this diverted his attention as a writer away from personal experience towards the representation of ideas.

Realistic portrayal of rural hardship was not Linton's primary aim, but the purpose of the sequence was to suggest deeper, historical causes of local suffering in the manner described in his Monthly Repository review of Channing. The Corn Law thus becomes in Linton's handling part of a continuity, and is given as a symptom of a broader pattern of historical dispossession, frequently invoked by radical writers in the 1830s as the 'Robber-Law' or Norman yoke interpretation of English history:

Why is't that famish'd Englishmen
In felon gaols are pent?
That thieves and palaced pensioners
May gorge themselves with Rent.
What is't that widows English wives,
That starves poor families?
What made them poor? The Robber-Law:-
Doth JUSTICE claim no fees? (IV, ll. 33-40)³⁰

Using recognisable types led the verse away from personal exploration of them. It might have been enough for Linton at this point that the ideas of hardship would have been recognized by the rural labourer, but his conscious attempt to render his meditations on weighty 'enduring principles' in ballad form is a weakness from an aesthetic perspective. However, 'Hymn' IV offers itself as part of other articles in the periodical, on the 'Corn-Law Humbug' and contemporary events in 'Notes of the Month', where a discursive articulation of the solution is offered, demonstrating the interdependence of the poetry and prose. The term 'hymn' may have acted as an ironic

³⁰ National, p. 107.

contrast to the content of the lyrics, particularly those which represent rural hardship and institutional neglect:

“We’re hungry, Mother! Give us bread.”
The peasant-children cry;
The peasant’s household laboureth hard
For the hire of poverty. (IV, ll. 1-4)

The echoing of contemporary culture was continued in ‘Hymn’ IX, which is an imitation of Tennyson’s ‘The “How” and the “Why”’, marking the beginning of a long dialogue in Linton’s published output with Tennyson’s poetry:

Why are white foreheads bow’d with shame,
And infant backs with toil?
Why is strong sinew’d Honesty
Trade’s ignominious spoil?
Why do grey men with maidens mate,
And orphans multiply?
Why is Content a slave’s reproach?—
Unriddle me the why! (IX, ll. 1-8)³¹

Linton might have come into contact with this poem from Poems, Chiefly Lyrical (1830) through W. J. Fox, who had published a favourable review of the book in 1831.³² Recent studies of Tennyson have explored how Fox and other liberal readers associated Tennyson with ‘social progress and improvement [. . .] annexed to a radical programme of change’, Linton’s admiration of Fox may therefore have affected his choice of this poem as his point of departure.³³ Given the reputation of Tennyson in the 1830s, this is a rare reference to a particular poem from this early publication. Like ‘The Incendiary’s Grave’, Linton expects his readers to recognise the reference to contemporary culture, although ‘Hymn’ IX uses parody more openly as a form of criticism. Tennyson’s poem is concerned with definitions which are worked through in an insistent pattern of repetition. Linton modifies rather than imitates and in the process

³¹ National, p. 289.

³² Westminster Review, 14 (1831), 210-24.

³³ Armstrong, p. 112.

implicitly criticizes the model for avoiding the immediate world, substituting questions with contemporary resonance where Tennyson's develops a meditational response. Linton opens up the Tennyson poem to questions about the role of poetry within a politically conscious community.

The valedictory tone of the last 'Hymn' concludes the sequence with a dialogue that moves toward a sense of searching for meaning rather than containing it in established categories. This search is reflected in the poem as a journey through different spaces which relieves the static feeling of the whole sequence:

Whither goest thou?
 To the home of the lawless and the free,
 Where, hand in hand,
 Over the fragrant land
 LOVE walketh with LIBERTY (XII, ll. 26-30)

The 'Hymns' are perhaps best understood in relation to background of political and religious dissent from which they spring. In performance the central theme of the series may be understood from aural capture of any one of the poems rather than a detailed apprehension of the whole sequence. This is particularly relevant to the strophic structure of Linton's verse, where the idea of liberty is repeated within individual poems and across the poems making up the entire sequence. Within individual poems each verse is formally self-contained and gives enough information for a recognition of the central theme. Repetition in this sense forms part of the political intention and explains the generality of language. The idea of the hymn as a form of creative dissent may have reflected Linton's intentions to generate appeal in readers in both liberal reformist and artisan class audiences. Oral expression is a feature of the National which includes different types of oral transcription: sermons, hymns, lectures, lyrics and speeches. As indicated in Chapter One, the importance of oratory in political meetings had given Linton a sense of fluent public speech as a form of collective action

as well as direct contact with an audience. As well as reflecting the theme of each issue, the verse forms acted as an interchange between oral and literary expression. This fact may be explained by the composite readership to which the National was appealing. Vicinus has discussed the centrality of the spoken voice in early Victorian artisan culture.

The notion of collective and the breadth of concern and appeal in the generality of expression in the 'Hymns' may reflect Linton's realisation that different regions of the country were preoccupied by local concerns, and that only broad outlines would appeal to or find a wide audience. The poetry from National continued to create appeal, shown by the fact that verse and articles from it were reprinted across the Chartist and Socialist press for two years after the periodical folded. Linton's writing had found an audience wider than that created by the periodical alone.

The use of biblical imagery and symbols resulted in vigorous writing, as in some chapters of the 'Revelations of Truth', a verse narrative influenced by Lamennais' Paroles d'un Croyant. In Linton's 'Revelations' the 'condition of England' is given as a series of visionary biblical paraphrases which refract his urban experience. The theme of each part of the 'Revelations of Truth' coincides with the central themes of the periodical. In the penultimate issue Linton relates the cover image 'The Deluge' to 'Revelations' XXV. In this chapter the speaker's apprehension of 'the promised land', 'rich and fertile, like unto a garden of delicious flowers', as a guaranteed outcome of the present social order requires an apocalyptic resolution of the slave-master opposition:

I see the whole race of Adam divided into two vast armies; and they fight hand to hand, and the carnage is terrible.

I see a banner planted upon a mound of earth like the grave of a poorman; and inscribed upon the banner are these words, Divine Right. and behold one who approacheth and plucketh it down, and rendeth it, and trampleth it under his feet; and he planteth another banner in its stead:

and the words which are written thereon are these, The Rights of Man.³⁴

This kind of abstract, transcendentalist emphasis may have alienated many potential working-class readers familiar with the simplistic aims of the Penny Magazine or the topicality of the Northern Star. The independence of the National also excluded the periodical from effective appeal to an appreciable audience: successful publications were often the organs of particular groups, which guaranteed a minimum circulation.³⁵

The sonnets that Linton wrote for the National are significant in relation to later chapters of this thesis because these early poems show the point from which his use of compact verse forms developed. The sonnets reinforce the argument that reflection upon political objectives forms as much a part of agitation as the objectives themselves. Like the hymn form, the compactness of the sonnet allows each poem to deal with its theme as a distinct formal identity while allowing the individual poem to be part of a sequence. The diction and themes of Linton's poems were informed by Wordsworth's sonnets, republished in 1838 and reprinted by Linton in the National: long sentencing broken mid line by rhetorical question or summative statement. The special attraction of the sonnet for Linton may have been its place in a tradition where lyric creativity could be identified with the patriotic act. Linton's awareness of this tradition-simultaneous connection with a long tradition with what he saw as its recent manifestation in Wordsworth's sonnets.

The National sonnets are concerned with the poet's perception of a disparity in contemporary society between 'natural' states and their distortion in conventions, a preoccupation that might have been related to his grief over the loss of the intellectual companionship he had experienced with his first wife Laura.³⁶ The conventions that

³⁴ National, p. 352.

³⁵ Radical Artisan, p. 22.

³⁶ W. J. L., to Laura Wade, 1 September 1835, NLA Ms 1698 / 321.

come in for attention are marriage, and definitions of personal conduct. Linton's intensity of feeling on this theme takes the form of a Shelleyan idiom which, as Chapter One of this thesis has indicated, would have been recognised by readers from different social backgrounds by 1839. As with the 'Hymns', the sonnets follow the assumption of certain central values which are given as repeated emblems rather than explored or brought out through the process of the verse. The sonnets are used to build up the reader's visualisation of the idea of community that informs the rest of the National.

'The Licensed', the second poem in the sequence, deals with notions of a natural condition of existence, a recurrent theme in the National, given in this poem as an observation on social conventions as ritual in relation to women:

The Rite is done;
And now in the eye of law the twain are one [.....]
Was not she wed by her great Love before?
O God! It is a grievous tyranny
When empty form thus mines in the very core
Of natural affection's purity!
The crawling Custom dwelleth in the gate
Of our poor Being's dearest sanctity. (ll. 3-4, 9-14)³⁷

Linton had experienced prejudices concerning marital conventions: he lived and had children with his deceased wife's sister, probably without marrying. But it seems that despite the abstract and progressive nature of the theme of women in the National sonnets, the closeness of the verse to Linton's emotional experience affected his ability to communicate the insights into social conventions that informs the poems.

The fourth sonnet, 'Life's Hypocrisy', works within the same framework of abstract ideas and describes an inner state that is inherently pure:

³⁷ National, p. 11.

Chameleon-like, our life's complexion
 Hath various aspects, toned of many hues
 According fellowship, a base reflexion
 Straining the mirror in the soul. To choose
 One Image for heart-worship, nor be won
 By passing shadows weakly to unloose
 Our earnest gaze of love – methinks that this
 Were nobler: - Doubt it not! But, in this world
 Of the turned Hypocrite, 'tis treasonous
 To let the spirit's free thoughts be unfurled; (ll. 1-10)³⁸

The spirit's natural state is seen as suppressed by 'constructions hideous'. In the poems that deal with inwardness as a function of change the ideas are articulated with more clarity and confidence:

When shall that glorious day dawn on our land,
 When the fierce lion of a vile, o'er fed,
 And falsehood-founded Hierarchy's pride;
 And He, girt with the independent band,
 The black sheep of his flock, by him misled;
 Down in the dust shall lay them side by side,
 All-tamed and harmless; and the gentle hand
 Of artless childhood lead them in the way
 Of the true Wisdom? – When the high spring-tide
 Of equal Freedom from its base of sand
 The brazen-visaged, with his feet of clay,
 The hereditary idol, sweeps away,
 Heaven's azure, by the varied Iris spann'd
 Shall smile away the tears by nations shed. ('A Prophecy')³⁹

The sonnet form accommodates the syntactical compression more readily than the ballad metre of the 'Hymns' and, in the case of 'A Prophecy', contributes to the poem's effect. The delayed resolution of the opening question deftly maintains the reader's interest until the echo of Daniel 2 in the sestet. 'When' is used in the first couplet to question the likelihood of the millennium, and to assert its inevitability as a pivotal term in the authoritative response 'When the high spring-tide'. 'When' as a question thus becomes 'when' as a statement of certainty. The poem therefore poses a

³⁸ National, p. 23.

³⁹ National, p. 37.

question in relation to the notion of the 'glorious day' but supplies an answer which modifies the temporal dimension of the sonnet's question. In this respect Linton is using the exposition-response structure of the sonnet form. 'When the high spring-tide' is given precedence over the following image of the 'brazen-visaged, with his feet of clay'. The time frame in this poem is complex, since in the sestet 'sweeps away' seems to stand on its own as a present tense phrase, yet refers to a future event, the syntax being 'When the high spring-tide / Of equal Freedom from its base of sand / The brazen-visaged [. . .], sweeps away'. Placed at the end of the line 'sweeps away' creates a dynamic contrast with the static 'Heaven's azure' where 'Heaven's' has an ambiguous status as both poetic description of the sky and as a reference to a transcendental location. This use of tense acts as a rhetorical reinforcement of the political message, but it also indicates a lively interest in the changing inflections of the same term in different syntactical positions. The poem's use of Daniel 2 also makes the reader aware of the apocalypse that must necessarily precede the millennium. However, in replacing the stone of Daniel 2 with the force of a tide the sonnet emphasises the universality and inevitability of social change, replacing the destructive connotations of apocalypse with the action of 'equal Freedom' as a natural event. The dissolution of established authority is convergent with the sense of the biblical model. Rather than confusing literal with metaphorical experience, the sonnet shows how Linton was aware of the gap separating language and the fulfilment of aspirational Chartist politics. However, the form determines what is possible; used in this way, the sonnet form led Linton to concentrate on the appeal of the ideas rather than an explanation of them. Like 'The Incendiary's Grave', the writer's personal experience is tempered by learning and abstraction since the events described derive from texts not experience. Rather than implying a simplistic conviction in the image of an earthly paradise as a viable model for his vision of the future, Linton is suggesting the ways in which textual authority may

be related to contemporary events in personal terms by each reader; and uses as an example of this his own use of biblical imagery as play with the model. Rather than following the Chartist tendency of scripture as precedent, Linton modifies the biblical paradigm: in the sonnet salvation through faith is displaced by a symbol of 'equal Freedom' which, in the context of the National, can only be interpreted as the concerted action of 'the people'.

'A Prophecy' represents Linton's momentary discovery of a voice through which to match his inward sense of political conviction with lyric form. Some of the sonnets in the National are, however, diffuse in structure, almost as if Linton expected assumptions about a universal idiom to replace the insight of verbal imagery. On the whole, Linton's attempt to exercise lyric creativity in the context of liberal political reform results in an experimental combination of polemic and romantic poetic language. However, the correlation between Linton's purposes and his ability to render them verbally lacks unity, consequently the meaning is obscure in some of the sonnets

When dealing with a specific idea Linton's writing takes advantage of the compactness of the sonnet form, for example in 'A Gentleman', in which the question of definitions is concentrated:

A Gentleman! – One, who can handle well
 His knife and fork at table; who can hand
 A "lady" to her carriage; who will stake
 The poor man's tear-earned money at some Hell,
 Pigeon a trusting friend, and bravely stand
 The chance of "Homicide", a polished rake,
 One who admires "the Women"; who can lie
 With a most finished grace; whose excellence
 Owes some addition to habiliment?
 A plain, pure-minded man; self-poised; intent
 To give to none occasion of offence;
 Sincere, yet kind; assiduous to please,
 Yet guarding self-approval? – Which of these
 Is Gentleman, in Nature's Heraldry?⁴⁰

⁴⁰ National, p. 37.

This particular poem is quoted by Smith to illustrate that Linton was 'at once attracted and repelled' by the cultural values that he found in W. J. Fox's circle.⁴¹ Incisive and economical in satirical effect and phrasing, the poem posits two different world views so that the reader is presented with a choice between alternative definitions of the gentleman. The choice is limited by the act of contrast but it may be argued, in the context of Linton's integration of lyric and public purpose, that definitions are necessary to communicate the ideals he asks his readers to consider. In this sense Linton's craft as an engraver may have reinforced the value of interpreting, even following such a pattern.

This sonnet reflects in miniature the dynamic of contrasts in the periodical through which readers are presented with the idea of community as an entity which might be shaped through acts of individual choice. In his social criticism Linton encourages the reader to move between social categories, a mode designed to create contrast between social realities and experiences. This method shows influences of early Victorian graphic visualizations of society in which a layered graphic model portrays society as a set of potentials, a form that Louis James considers central to the evolution of a mass readership: 'To trace the development of this concept in working-class journals would be to examine the roots of the socialist movement'.⁴² The layered, episodic images attempt to convey a concept of layered society, a model that Smith suggests Linton drew from Lamennais, but the highlighting of radically different possibilities in parallel texts or juxtaposition is a frequent technique in Cruikshank and late eighteenth century modes of social commentary which Linton mentioned as

⁴¹ Radical Artisan, p. 14.

⁴² Louis James, Print and the People 1819-1851 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 80.

features of his parental home.⁴³ In Linton's writing this emerges as his awareness of dualities. The speaker's shifting positions often place the reader in contrasting vantage points, a method that may be related to Linton's interpretation of Shelley, particularly 'Queen Mab', where the visionary experience involves a shift of perspective from experience to a point outside the normal frame of reference. The cover image of Lowther Castle (Figure 18) is an example of Linton's use of an aerial viewpoint that moves between social viewpoints.

Linton undermined the feudal implications of the image of the castle in the article that follows, which adopts initially the tone of a purely topographical description but concludes with 'All very beautiful! but-What is the price paid by the People to secure these superfluities to the noble proprietor?' The subsequent article secures the logical extension of this idea by quoting at length from Southwood Smith's account of living conditions in London.⁴⁴ That there was evidently an appeal in this to the radical community is shown by the reprinting of the article in New Moral World as 'A Contrast', omitting, however, Linton's gloss on the topographical description.⁴⁵ The strategy of contrasts is employed throughout the National, such as 'The Speech' in which parallel texts of the Queen's speech are headed 'The speech as it was [. . .] and [. . .] as it should have been'.⁴⁶ In contrasts the evidence is put on display, but it is the reader's responsibility to draw the conclusions, an idea of the reader's independence in Linton's idea of contrasting viewpoints that was shared by the artisan community. The Lowther Castle example also shows how Linton conceived of his writing and craft as means of conveying the moral force message in a way that played purpose and form off

⁴³ Memories, p. 2.

⁴⁴ National, pp. 199-201.

⁴⁵ New Moral World, 1 June 1839, pp. 511-12.

⁴⁶ National, pp. 108-110.

THE NATIONAL,

A LIBRARY FOR THE PEOPLE.



LOWTHER CASTLE;
Westmoreland.

Figure 18. W. J. Linton (and Henry Linton), engraver and draughtsman, 'Lowther Castle', from the National (1839).

each other, enriching the social purpose rather than viewing the political element as a form of unlawful entry into the creative act.

There is a further element yielded by a reading of the sonnets in their original context, but distinct from it. The sonnets show not only Linton's exercise of lyric in the service of the liberal concept of enduring principles, they also externalise a personal process of unresolved anxieties about determinism. While Linton may have been unaware of this as an element in the poems, it is nevertheless a personal motive that feeds into the qualities of the verse. For instance, 'Life's Hypocrisy' concerns personal freedom polarised with social conventions that are the product of rigid hierarchies, 'Labour of Folly' portrays the resentment of individual identity as a fixed value in hierarchical society, and 'The Mystery' describes a perception of the inevitability of evil. Played out in the sonnets, this anxiety about determinism is implicit in many aspects of the National, for example in Linton's discussion of how social status was determined by birth. The figures that inhabit Linton's model of social hierarchy possess an equal innate potential for development and self-fulfilment given the right conditions: 'We see no essential dissimilarity, at the time of their birth, between the child of the beggar and the child of the monarch: let them be changed in their cradle; their after-conduct will ever betray their origin'.⁴⁷ Potential for individual development is thus seen as limited by a society in which hierarchy determined concepts of personal value that, as Linton's changeling image suggests, is distinct from social position. Linton viewed self-determination as an escape from this. Linton understood the movement to remove the newspaper stamp, Chartism and the concept of a republic, as the result of individual acts accumulating to the inevitable triumph of the *sensus communis*. Yet the consequence of this image of political activity was to imply a potentially deterministic model of history in which progress in the past towards individual liberty acts as a

⁴⁷ 'Our Political Creed', National, p. 27.

reflection of the future. Linton partially resolved this tension between self-determination and external limitations through personal faith that the unknown represented desirable progress. Linton would later be sceptical of natural selection as a deterministic model of life in which personal aspiration or progressive design had no place, and one of his last poems indicates that he never truly resolved his anxieties about determination: 'I wait God's will for what may come to me. / I bow, and fret not at the Mystery, / Believing what He doeth is done well' ('A Pagan Outlook', ll. 30-32).⁴⁸

In the past ten years the National has often been discussed in the light of its relationship with Chartism, and the idea of a unified Chartist culture. According to Crys Armbrust in an article on the National, Linton's inclusion of 'Mariana' and other Tennyson extracts 'act as further indictments against a tendency not only in Tennyson studies, but in the discipline at large, to privilege and to perpetuate prescriptive generalisations [. . .] which have too often discouraged critical enquiry into, perhaps, less obvious, but, nonetheless, equally viable, areas of scholarly investigation [. . .] Like other periodicals that reprinted poetry, The National has author-specific value as a primary source material through which we can investigate an element of canon formation that is too little dealt with in our general consideration of an author and his reputation, that is, the editorial appropriations (authorized and unauthorized) to which an author and his work are sometimes subjected'.⁴⁹ This appraisal is however an instance and illustration of the limiting effects of locating Linton, through the content of his writing, within 'the Chartist Literary Canon'. The writing often tells a more complex story. It is telling that in approaching the National in this way Armbrust has overlooked the creative elements in Linton's responses to his materials, proposing that

⁴⁸ Ms dated 1896, Beinecke.

⁴⁹ Crys Armbrust, 'Tennyson's Political Readers: W. J. Linton's *The National* and the Chartist Literary Canon' Victorian Periodicals Review, 26 (Winter 1993), 199-202, 200.

the National represents a more analytical approach by Linton that the material actually supports.

In its diverse sources and unified structure the National may be seen as a symbol of the aspirations of an artisan who, through his journalistic projects, extended the cultural boundaries of the early Chartist movement. Linton's practice in the National grew out of earlier models of radical journalism such as the Poor Man's Guardian, mapped out a similar set of social-political relations to those presented in the New Moral World, and Northern Star. Other continuities have been noted by Janowitz, who finds similarities to Thomas Spence's Pig's Meat as evidence of an echo of romantic-communitarian concerns within early Chartism.⁵⁰ It is tempting to read the National as an adumbration of the Chartist cultural unity described by Janowitz or by Finn.⁵¹ It was possible in 1839 to perceive Chartism as a unified movement by providing an account of contemporary political ideas and outlook. However, Linton's acts of journalistic self-definition in the National claim independence from specific movements, and the synthetic structure of the periodical claimed kinship with humanitarian commitments typical of liberalism: universal suffrage, liberty, slavery emancipation. Rather than supporting a specifically Chartist or working class model of culture, the National located itself firmly within the liberal sphere where established authors may be identified with the broad outlines of political reform.

The radical press was influenced by Linton's choice of material. Responses to the National commented on its diversity: the Northern Star described it as 'the very best of the cheap periodicals that we have yet seen [. . .] [knowledge] is conveyed through a variety of elegant and pleasing mediums'.⁵² This was echoed by readers of the

⁵⁰ Janowitz, p. 76.

⁵¹ Janowitz, Finn.

⁵² Northern Star, 9 February 1839, p. 7.

Owenite New Moral World, who found in the National the 'discrimination' of 'a poet and artist of an high order', and saw the periodical as the product of labour 'in a vineyard possessing, alas, too few labourers'.⁵³ After the National folded, the Chartist Circular and McDouall's Chartist Journal continued to reprint articles from it. The variety of publications that printed positive notices shows that Linton's writing style appealed to every facet of the liberal readership. However, the density of argument may have found appeal with a relative minority of literate labourers.

Linton considered the unity he brought to his materials as the positive value of his editorial role. The success of his approach is indicated in the comments of modern readers, who have all responded to the periodical's control over its diversity.⁵⁴

In 1839 the aspirational strain of Linton's poetry is apparent, but his personal process of working out the integration of public elements was incomplete. Apart from transferring political ideas into compact forms of verse the writing served a personal working out of these ideas. Linton turned to verse at points of crisis at which times writing became a therapeutic exercise for him. He would also use verse to work out the problems and tensions implicit in the material with which he was preoccupied. Verse therefore served a personal role in the sense that it allowed Linton to work out his personal understanding of concepts. The confused nature of this element in the National sonnets was possibly the consequence of the incomplete nature of this process. The presence of the public with the personal process of working out ideas becomes more controlled in the 1850s when he was able to concentrate on his inner responses to political ideas, and therefore allowed him to balance the inward and public elements of the poems. However, because of its journalistic context we might read the National poems as ideograms which serve only as illustrations of the historical facts of Chartism

⁵³ New Moral World, 27 July 1839, p. 638.

⁵⁴ Altick, p. 207, Vicinus, pp. 99-100, Janowitz, p. 76.

and reform. This denies the elements of a personal process in the intentions, purpose and construction of the verse and the meanings it communicates.

The role of culture in Linton's republicanism is not solely as an element of political propaganda. The oppositional public platform was altering in the early 1840s, and competing modes of expression emerged as vehicles for the purposes of oppositional expression. The National shows Linton's responsiveness to this in his participation in constructing and consolidating a reader's sense of the possible contact points between texts, achieved through combination of prose and verse within the defining terms of radicalism and early Chartism. In the National it is apparent that even before Linton became a disciple of Mazzini in 1841, his concept of republicanism entailed self-realisation, and for Linton this meant developing a literary sensibility and creative aspirations towards authorship, qualities which enriched the radical community in 1839-40. George Jacob Holyoake, Linton's associate from the early 1840s, later recognised the value of this combination of public discourse with creative aspirations: 'no English publicist ever carried [Republicanism] with so much earnestness, brightness, and grace'.⁵⁵

Through the 1840's Linton located himself in a mediative position between the discourses typical to liberal reform, and the interests of 'the people' whose viewpoint he claimed to represent. This carried with it some problems, which emerge in the form and content of his writing. Linton's comments on language in Odd Fellow, discussed in detail later in the next chapter, indicate an anxiety about this mediative position, but at this point in his career Linton sidelined the potential problems of his authorial viewpoint. It may have been that this was due to the solution he found in literary culture. Linton realised that his writing had to appeal to different audiences; liberal,

⁵⁵ Warpath, p. 73.

artisan, labourer, while maintaining consistency and integrity. In attempting to address the nature of culture as a part of his political programme Linton was relying on existing terms of radical discourse. Linton applied his knowledge of radical protest literature in a manner that now reads as formulaic and self-conscious. It may also be argued that the mediative position undermined his capacity for individual expression. However, as I have shown in relation to the National, his manipulation of those forms of discourse which carried authority was tempered by an awareness of their effects. Poetry was part of this in that it seemed to guarantee an interclass readership, shown in Linton's echoes of Wordsworth which set out to elicit a reflective and critical response from a reader.

As Linton's editorial comments in the National pointed out, the identity of culture was defined by European literary tradition as a valuable resource for the conceptualisation and development of a non-hierarchical society. However, it must be recognised that in Linton's concept of national identity the founding principle is the individual, which sought to enrich existing culture and through it to express his perceptions as a member of a working class, maintaining the integrity of origins, while drawing from and preserving a tradition of enlightenment liberalism. Maidment argues that as the 1840s progressed the middle class became increasingly interested in the nature and role of the working class writer, and he gives as examples the casualties of middle class cultural patronage. Linton managed to side step these problems of interaction with and participation in high culture, but he rejected class as a determinant of individual liberty and therefore falls outside the Marxist lineage. Linton wrote as 'One of the People', with a broad humanitarian aim in the liberal mode. Where Linton might have offered a more personal perspective was in his experience of the workshop, and of London. However, like Thomas Cooper, Linton's radical views were worked out in the conservative modes of description such as tradition and constructive liberalism.

Janowitz has touched on the idea that Linton's lyrics in the National reflect the connection between romantic diction and the organic figures of speech of the 1830s that reflected the development of a self-conscious concern with the sociality of Chartist creativity. While this may be present in the communitarian elements of the poems, the verse writing in the National represents Linton's personal search for a politically conscious form of lyric which retained the characteristics of expressive language. The sonnets have a feeling of provisionality about them, but rather than excusing their faults as lyrics, this explains their creative rather than purely polemical purpose for Linton as a writer, despite the difficulty readers may now experience in separating polemic and lyric either in intention or intended effect. Modern readers might find that Linton built his meaning too consciously into the verse, undermining the possibilities for a dynamic resonance over time through a reader's personal visualisation of ideas. Linton was to give greater significance to the reader's share in his later work, but in 1839 he was concerned with the ways in which he could define culture and his place within it. Linton saw the author as a stable element within change and the form of the National reflected this in presenting the literary tradition as a point of reference.

Chapter Three: 1840-48

Linton's authorial aspirations in 1839 placed him in a liberal framework within which poetry acted in the service of artisan class political protest. The National shows how Linton conceived of and found his voice in some of the established and defined authorial roles in 1830s liberal and radical journalism: the independent commentator, the compassionate orator, and the lyric poet. The combination of these voices in the National shows how Linton's radical outlook was coterminous with liberalism in the sense that his authorial aspiration was developed through interaction with his liberal sympathies, shown in his reflection of his hopes in a pantheon of liberal contemporaries whose work he had incorporated into the liberal aims of the periodical: 'Alfred Tennyson, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Carlyle, and Southwood Smith [. . .] Let these be our leaders!'¹ In addition, his participation in and contribution to the radical iconography in the form of his combination of verse and journalism in the National places him in a unique relationship to the construction of a Victorian radical concept of opposition and literary production.

This chapter concentrates on an evaluation of how Linton's authorial concerns developed after the diversity of concerns in the National, taking into consideration critical studies which have given accounts of Linton's writing in the 1840s. The attention to liberalism and Chartism in this chapter is intended to clarify the relevance of placing Linton into a working-class lineage, and to address how his early Victorian radical perspective affected his understanding of literary culture in relation to creative aspiration and public discourse, thus

¹ 'Universal Suffrage' 1840. This text from P and V vol. 3, pp. 114-15.

forming a bridge to the broader concern with the crests and troughs of Linton's career outlined in Chapter One.

Since the publication of E. P. Thompson's influential account of how political and class awareness developed in the 1830s there has been an increasing interest in the experiences of early Victorian radicals.² This has led to the inclusion of personal and creative writing as part of scholarly methods of establishing the historiography of the period. This interest in the personal experience of the effects of industrialisation has been reflected by critical attention to autobiography as a way of understanding the Victorian experiences of a fluctuating society, leading to closer attention to the work of individuals within Victorian radical movements. Recent approaches, such as those discussed in the Introduction, have read Chartist poetry as an expression and reflection of the movement's self-conscious engagements with matters of language and society, a view of Chartist poetry that reflects the broader concerns of modern literary critics and historians of Victorian culture with class-consciousness, and the authenticity of Victorian writing that derived from or concerned the working classes.³ Expectations of an authentic working-class voice in Linton's writing are frustrated by the absence not only of a dialectic, but by his denial of class theory as the basis of understanding society and how it might be changed. What we do find in Linton's output through the 1840s however is an intelligent response to the needs of literary and journalistic conventions. This conservative strand in Linton's voice is alien to a modern sensibility seeking class-consciousness, but recent work on the developments within mid-Victorian liberal

² *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968). Further references will be given as Thompson.

³ Janowitz, Maidment, Schwab, Michael Sanders, 'Poetic Agency: Metonymy and Metaphor in Chartist Poetry, 1838-1852' *Victorian Poetry Special Issue: The Poetics of the Working Classes* 89 (2001), 111-137.

thought indicate that conservative-radical concepts of society like Linton's 'were located within a richly textured fabric of radical nationalism and internationalism' in which Marxist concepts of community and political change figured as a 'single, often isolated strand'.⁴

As a wood engraver Linton was experientially close to the higher levels of the working population, and the middle class world of publishing and artistic production, a mediative position which allowed him to cultivate the independent and critical outlook on competing perceptions of the aims of Chartism that was typical of the liberal-minded artisan class in the 1840s.⁵ He was aware of the conditions of the labouring poor outside London, but in the 1840s he was distant enough from these regional concerns for his thoughts to have developed as intellectual sympathies, an outlook that is apparent in the National poetry. Whatever class inflections are discoverable in Linton's writing were the result of his self-conscious use of liberal views of labour, capital and society, which he directed toward what he believed were the anterior causes of the contrasts in quality of life that he experienced every day in London. Class enters into his discourse as an element of his conviction that restructured political institutions could operate to effect change in the way labour and production was conceived of in his model of society which incorporated traditional knowledge and patterns of living. However, Linton's ideas for society required the reader to think in terms of political and social institutions as interrelated agencies of change. This was a position that recent research on Chartism tells us defined the character of proletarian rather than liberal reform.⁶ Furthermore, Linton was a complex figure in his ideas, embodying Victorian liberal and recognisably modern

⁴ Finn, p. 307.

⁵ *ibid*, p. 34.

⁶ *ibid*, p. 75.

working-class radical concepts of culture in society. Like John Bright, he understood literary culture as a form of preparing the working classes for enfranchisement, but brought to this framework a personal understanding of culture as a realm of emotional release from the polemical demands of public political discourse. For instance, there are emotive elements in his writing through the early 1840s which are distinct from the traditional idiom he used in some of his verse. The consequence of this multiple focus is apparent in his journalism and poems in the Odd Fellow, and the doggerel poem 'Bob Thin' which is used later in this chapter to discuss the ramifications of politically conscious writing sympathetic to contemporary themes of labour which adopted an authoritative perspective through authorial voice.

As a journalist and poet Linton's emphasis on participation in rather than consumption of liberal culture was shared with other aspirational artisans with whom he joined in publishing ventures in the 1840s, such as Holyoake and Cooper, whose outlooks Linton failed to appreciate despite their proximity to his own. Holyoake later suggested that his and Linton's differences on Secularism derived from divergent ideas of what the process of social change involved rather than a matter of opposing aims. In relation to their respective success in finding recognition for their models of community, Linton's and Holyoake's dealings with John Stuart Mill form an interesting comparison: Holyoake's constructive relationship with Mill is reflected in an extensive correspondence, while Linton received two polite but curt notes declining invitations for article contributions.

Linton's 1840 Life of Thomas Paine developed his relationship with James and Ellen Watson, who had lent personal assistance in the production of the National. In return Linton wrote this highly successful biography which, as

one of Linton's most popular works, was reprinted as late as 1892.⁷ Concise and lively, Linton used the biographical form to draw out the controversial elements in previous accounts of Paine's life, and made critical use of the existing published biographies, indicating their inconsistencies and departures from demonstrable facts. For instance, in describing Paine's return to America: 'Here too was another sore. The great Washington was a slave-holder. Paine hated the "infernal traffic in Negroes"; had only kept silence on that subject during the revolution, for fear of ruining all'.⁸ Linton concentrated on presenting a figure of Paine consistent in his commitments. The conclusion of the biography set out to show that Paine 'never ceased to sympathize' with those 'without political existence', and touches on the acquisition of culture: 'Paine was one of the People, of the hand-labouring class [. . .] save a little grammar-school ploughing, he was self-taught. Let the Serf bear this in mind'.⁹

A closely-argued essay giving the case for universal suffrage, which Linton based on a lecture he delivered to the Walthamstow Mutual Education Society in 1840, offers a clear image of his interpretation of the radical analysis of contemporary society. The essay is representative of many prose articles he had written through the 1840s in the way he integrated his interest in literature within his discursive writing. Linton's prose in the early 1840s also raises the question of how far a borrowed idiom and an authoritative position in relation to his audience masked him from direct contact as a writer with the aspects of modern society that he was tackling through his writing.

The arguments in the lecture appeal to a sense of individual worth and value by means of the language of natural right. The printed version of the

⁷ *Life of Thomas Paine* (New York: Peter Eckler, 1892).

⁸ *Life of Thomas Paine* (London Watson 1840) p. 36.

⁹ *Life of Thomas Paine*, p. 43.

lecture begins with Lamennais' Modern Slavery, which Linton had translated in 1840. In the lecture he used Lamennais as the starting point for each part of his argument. The opening locates the reader firmly in rationalist territory: the claim for political equality is based on the grounds of principle allied to the idea of political enfranchisement: 'the natural equality of humankind-the right to assist in making the laws which are to bind us'.¹⁰ This is developed into an extended discussion on universal suffrage in an argument that posits a rationalist concept of individual liberty as the basis of community:

Equality consists in their common humanity, in the distinct individuality of each- [. . .] every human being has an independent organisation, an independent will, a frame which is his own [. . .] by no specious contrivance can he transfer that work to the shoulders of any other man [. . .] Fetter him as you will-trample upon and debase his spirit-brutify his thought-control him so that his muscles move obediently to your command as the steam-engine to the touch of the engineer, so that his whole being is the slave of your dominant will, and his thoughts the echo of your dictation,-still, spite of all this, you cannot make him one with yourself [. . .] You can never wholly root out the individuality within him [. . .] you cannot tread out the soul of the living man. That one thing is beyond the reach of tyrants.¹¹

Within the boundaries of the lecture or essay form, the analogy of labour to mechanistic movement indicates Linton's anxiety over a deeper loss in the progress towards a modern society in the absence of cultural recognition of individual potential as distinct from reform based on class or social levelling. The alignment of steam power with the type of the slave shows how the argument constructs links between abstract ideas and their meaning within a contemporary context by finding concrete images drawn from the physical

¹⁰ P and V vol. 3, 95.

¹¹ P and V vol. 3, pp. 95-6.

environment. The repeated allusion to the slavery analogy indicates Linton's conviction of its relevance to his audience, and its validity as a term with which to describe labour relations in his society. Oratorical repetition of the concept in different contexts across Linton's writing brings out its different associations, but the terminology of slavery as an analogy for the political condition of the working classes was derived from the over arching millenarian idiom of radical and early Chartist descriptions of the motivations behind reform. Linton was therefore building on and developing his audience's established understanding of the purposes behind demands for electoral reform as a starting point for other fundamental changes to the structure of society. The slavery analogy is used referentially in the essay as part of a set of images that Linton, to a certain extent, assumed would be understood by his readers as figurative rather than literal, but the clarity of his example from the modern environment appeals to the reader's apprehension of how the term related to contemporary discourse on government. Linton's use of analogy makes this conceptual approach possible, and is employed to effect:

Every human being is by nature's law [. . .] lord of himself and of his own life. True, their realms may be of various powers and grandeur, but each in his own realm is paramount. And, as when sovereigns of nations meet together to treat of their common affairs, an equality subsists among them, though perhaps no two of them rule over precisely the same territory, so in treaties between human beings (and just government is a series of treaties between members of society) each and every treaty is entitled to the same footing of equality [. . .] All else is dictation and overruling of some kind-tyranny, by whatever polished name you may christen it'.¹²

¹² P and V vol. 3, pp. 96-7.

The argument moves from the analogy of sovereignty to a direct parallel with the way governments operate, which follows on to an illustration of how agreements between individuals might function as a model for the nation state. The analogy shrewdly reverses the initial terms of comparison with hierarchy by showing that the same principles apply equally to sovereigns as to the rest of society, except that Linton slips in 'human beings' as the foundational term with which to describe his concept of how individual value might be conceptualised. The language of rationality led to Linton's inclusive conclusion on the role of women in society; 'Is there any mark of the male gender in the arguments with which we have striven to enforce the right of human freedom'. The argument proceeds to elaborate this in terms of universal liberty; 'beware, lest, from surrendering the rights of women, thou become careless of the rights of thy fellow-men'.¹³ In Linton's argument, political economy was iniquitous because it made no provision for the 'weaker' individuals, or for those disadvantaged by a system of competition which placed economic transactions over human value. While this point remains a principle rather than a detailed map for reform, Linton employed it creatively in 'Bob Thin'.

The recurrence of a borrowed language of resistance from earlier radical journalism in Linton's writing bears out Gareth Steadman Jones's proposition that patterns of language within the radical community in the late 1830s were transitional rather than atavistic forms of expression: 'Chartism incorporated many of the new themes which became prominent in the 1820s, but not in such a way as to breach [radicalism's] basic presuppositions, nor necessarily in

¹³ P and V vol. 3, p. 103, 107.

directions which drew it closer to a later class-based language of socialism'.¹⁴

As Jones goes on to argue, the language of writers like Linton may be termed anachronistic only if a reading of the radical press of the 1840s presupposes a sea change within patterns of oppositional thought around 1839-40. When evidence is taken primarily from the writing in radical and Chartist publications a sense of continuity with previous phases of radical activity is apparent. Jones's idea of 'incorporation' of earlier patterns of style and thought means that by attending to elements of continuity in Linton's language rather than looking for innovation we might come closer to an understanding of how he conceived of creative aspiration as part of public discourse. Other accounts on the transition of Chartism into socialism in the Victorian period would suggest that Linton's awareness of and self-location within the radical tradition of the rule of law as the prime mover of social change that led to a self-consciously atavistic style of expression that emphasised the lineage of his claims for universal suffrage.¹⁵

The important aspect of journalistic writing for Linton in the 1840s was that it became a supporting framework for a public discourse which worked within existing frameworks of reform. In this context Linton used sonnet, ballad and hymn according to what the forms could contribute to content rather than as vehicles for self-expression. Through self-conscious use of literary extracts his writing emphasised aesthetic and cultural continuities while advocating social reform from within an individualistic framework. The centrality of a literary tradition for radical or oppositional culture in the 1840s has been analysed by Janowitz as a creative response to the problems of voicing political concerns

¹⁴ 'The Language of Chartism', in The Chartist Experience: Studies in Working-Class Radicalism and Culture ed. James Epstein and Dorothy Thompson (Macmillan London 1982), p. 19. Further references will be given as Jones.

¹⁵ Finn, p. 50.

through existing literary forms. Her argument suggests that a self-conscious modification of romantic models by Chartist and radical writers was working within an interventionist understanding of poetry which carried various romantic concepts of the self into the 1830s and 1840s.

The constructive terms of Linton's writing in the 1840s are suggested in the ways in which he used references to literary culture as part of his journalism in Henry Hetherington's Odd Fellow. Linton's creative participation in the paper began in 1839 with a second series of political lyrics also named 'Hymns' over the pseudonym 'Spartacus'. These lyrics reaffirm the place of poetic creativity within the journalism. The term of his editorship, April 1841-August 1842, coincided with a critical year for Chartism. Indeed, Linton's final editorials allow us to follow the fragmentation of moderate Chartism in 1842.¹⁶ In addition to this content-based reading, the journalism also indicates Linton's developing concept of the writer-audience relationship in the context of journalism from his London-based artisanal perspective. The Odd Fellow is therefore included here for the ways in which it illuminates Linton's understanding of culture in relation to reform.

The journalism in the Odd Fellow responded to the representation of contemporary problems, definitions and conflicts in the mainstream press, and engaged in a rational dialogue with critics of parliamentary government, particularly Thomas Carlyle. Linton's central theme was the imperative for electoral reform. Many of the events and subjects drawn from modern society were treated as a confirmation of universal suffrage as the most productive route for the development of English society, such as Linton's responses to popular

¹⁶ Radical Artisan, p. 40.

newspaper accounts of state occasions, or foreign news in his weekly 'Newspaper Notables'. Through this insistence on universal suffrage Linton explored the possibilities for individual creativity. What emerges from Linton's Odd Fellow journalism is a concentration on the particulars of social injustices and current events as the inevitable consequence of class legislation and the perception of a historical process of disenfranchisement. In addition there are extended discussions on definitions of labour and its value within the framework of the radical analysis.

Judging from the contents of the Odd Fellow, Linton's frequent meditations in the leader articles on the nature of the writer's role, and his notion of the lyric poet implicit in the verse that he printed, he viewed the paper as an extension of the National. The themes in this chapter are therefore very much coterminous with the previous chapter's discussion of Linton's independent engagement with contemporary culture, which in turn links to his developing creative aspirations and his continuing search for a public voice in the early 1840s. The range of subjects and the detailed development of the arguments in the Odd Fellow journalism are the strong features of Linton's editorship in that the analyses and conclusions draw from a more specific range of sources than those of the National.

Linton's optimistic expectations of the readership are a feature of his editorship, although this may have contributed to the limited circulation of the Odd Fellow. These expectations emerge in several ways: arguments and concepts are developed across sequences of articles such as the sustained exploration of slavery in theory and practice, and its suitability as a descriptive

term for modern England.¹⁷ Current events are always related to historical precedent, or to literary reference, and a critical approach towards contemporary accounts of political events takes the form of a dialogue with contemporary material.

Like the National, Linton's writing in the Odd Fellow was preoccupied with the enfranchisement of the working classes by responding not only to contemporary events but also to the ways in which other liberals responded to them. A response to W. J. Fox's description of an apparent Chartist reliance on historical rights as precedents offers further insight into Linton's idea of authorial duty: 'we neither estimate our rights by "precedent" or "antiquity", nor do we 'trace our birthright to the reigns of monarchs [. . .] We tell *them* that laws and customs of England *have* recognised our demands-that they are not 'unprecedented' [. . .] and so we lead on a large number to listen to our demands, by that previous removal of prejudices and fears'.¹⁸ Linton argued that the principles behind the Charter had been recognised, and that arguments about the precedents for Chartism were outdated and unnecessary. Opposition in writing was therefore the task of pointing out where and how rights were infringed, particularly in the case of the writer or journalist engaged in the explanation of principles. Early in his editorship of the Odd Fellow the idea of the journalist's independent role in public discourse emerges. In the article 'Public Meetings' Linton discussed private meetings held to make decisions for others without reference to any opposing group or opinion: 'every honest journalist is bound to expose it, as a hole-and-corner endeavour to forge the

¹⁷ OF, 15, 22, 29 January, 5 February 1842, P and V vol. 5, pp. 12-31.

¹⁸ ' "Publicola" and the Chartist Declaration of Rights', OF 19 June 1841, P and V vol. 4, p. 36.

acceptance of the Public'.¹⁹ Linton uses the principle of open debate as the basis for an argument in favour of policy decision-making. Rather than producing the social commentary of contemporaries such as Mayhew, or later historians, Linton draws attention to the force of justification inherent in the enduring principles surrounding the concept of innate human equality.²⁰ This version of journalistic duty emerges in the following extract which is included here not with the intention of criticising the writing on the basis of its political intent, but to show what kind of approach Linton adopted to the cultural aspect of his programme:

It is not altogether out of place, even for the poorest working men, to become acquainted with the nature of the government under which they live [. . .] All human evils and sufferings have proceeded from ignorance[. . .] For if men open their eyes at all, they cannot help seeing that there is such a science as politics; and if they open their minds at all, they must perceive that their well-being depends very much on what political knowledge the nation has-the nation which is composed of individuals.²¹

Linton went on to argue that responsibility lay with individuals to embrace a concept of collective influence through co-ordinated individual actions, a position supported through reference to literary works created with the intention of questioning orthodoxy: 'Men should study anything that will enable them in any way to benefit humanity [. . .] And if it is right for man to prosecute this study, so it is also right for woman [. . .] There are no books written in a male language'.²² Linton suggested that the discourse of equal rights required active reader participation in the definition of 'political knowledge': '[the working classes] are not to be led away by any measure, whether of Free Trade,

¹⁹ OF, 24 April 1841, P and V vol. 6, p. 6.

²⁰ Jones, p. 6.

²¹ 'On the Study of Politics' OF 29 May 1841, P and V vol. 4, p. 17.

²² P and V vol. 4, p. 17.

of Poor Law Repeal, of Cheap Bread [. . .] They have been taught by dear experience to know that all these phrases can be used for a purpose'.²³ Linton did adopt slogans in his journalistic writing, but within them were the seeds for a reader's further reflection.

The different elements of the Odd Fellow journalism converge in the unification of fable and historical awareness in articles which drew extensively from Carlyle's 1839 essay Chartism. Linton had used short extracts from Carlyle in the National, but throughout the Odd Fellow he works his extracted material into the discursive fabric of each article. Linton had met and was impressed by Carlyle in early 1840 while requesting signatories to his 'protest against death-punishment', a project that had been inspired by Linton's part in the reprieves of Frost and Williams.²⁴ Carlyle's impression of Linton was less generous, distinguished only by the comparisons he drew between Linton and his contemporary journalists: 'Carlyle in 1849 had written to [Charles Gavan] Duffy, among other bits of advice: "Also do not much mind Linton, who is a well-enough meaning but, I fear, extremely windy creature, of the Louis Blanc, George Sand, etc, species"'.²⁵ The comment reveals as much about Carlyle's perception of journalism as it does of his view of Linton, yet the frequency of Linton's references to Carlyle in the 1840s and 1850s and the amount of space devoted to him in Memories, merits closer attention to bring out the correspondences and influences in Linton's writing at this time.²⁶

Linton's Odd Fellow references constantly return to the sections in Chartism that dealt with working-class resentment in relation to the nature of

²³ OF, 17 July 1841, P and V vol. 4, p. 60.

²⁴ Memories, Ch. 6 for the Newport uprising, pp. 44-45 for Linton's account of Carlyle.

²⁵ Memories, p. 110.

²⁶ Memories, Ch. 14.

parliamentary leadership and the aristocracy. In an article on universal suffrage the starting point is an extract from *Chartism*: 'Not towards the impossibility, "self-government" of a multitude by a multitude; but towards some possibility, government by the wisest, does bewildered Europe struggle', which Linton follows up with a question that continues but reverses Carlyle's view: 'It is true of the transition state, the government made necessary by our vices. And yet are we not governed toward the abrogation of all such government? -when the multitude will be wise enough to govern themselves?'²⁷ The dialogue with Carlyle is developed in an article printed in the following week, where a sentence from *Chartism* 'ought to drop a veil [. . .] change or die', is given so that he could respond directly to it: 'To change! Can the Ethiop change his skin? Let them give place to honest men [. . .] Let both parties give place to real representatives of the People'.²⁸ Linton went on however to insist that Carlyle's independent viewpoint was valuable: 'deep insight into the nature and history of government comes to us from a Carlyle-not M.P.'²⁹ This shows that Linton was engaged in an exploration rather than a denial of Carlyle's formulations, acknowledging the value of the chosen references yet treating Carlyle as an interlocutor rather than an authority. Linton's argument for universal suffrage was predicated on the basis of existing radical analyses of labour and its value, but we can see him applying this analysis to a contemporary writer in the same field.

In another article on *Chartism* Linton characterised Carlyle's position as aristocratic in principle by adopting a unilateral reading of the terms of *Chartism*:

²⁷ 'Universal Suffrage, and Government by the Wisest', *OF* 5 June 1841, *P and V* vol. 4, pp. 32-33.

²⁸ *OF* 12 June 1841, *P and V* vol. 4, pp. 32-33.

²⁹ *OF* 17 July 1841, *P and V* vol. 4, p. 61.

‘[the Charter] is the democratic principle of EQUAL RIGHTS, in opposition to the aristocratic or old feudal principle of MIGHT MAKES RIGHT’. Tory, Whig and Socialist are seen as specific forms of might, the latter because in the levelling programme ‘the intelligent should rule [. . .] the intellectually stronger ruling the weaker’. The article continues to engage in a dialogue with Carlyle: ‘We are not struggling and striving for a particular length of parliament, for certain nominal divisions and details—we are not struggling that each man shall have what Carlyle not inaptly calls—“his twenty-thousandth part of a master of tongue-fence” [. . .] but for a manlike place and relation [. . .] the bare recognition of universal freedom [. . .] is the main point [. . .] this we must have before can have any business to decide how we [the Chartists and parliament in negotiation] shall use it’.³⁰ Linton thus presented an alternative to Carlyle’s account of Chartism through echoes Carlyle’s phraseology in the phrase ‘a manlike place and relation’ but with a very different meaning from its use in Chartism. Linton insisted that the same language could be used to argue for ‘a manlike place and relation’ under different terms to those offered by Carlyle. Linton’s writing is a thoughtful and measured response which modified and particularised the terms of Carlyle’s arguments. These examples show Linton’s critical awareness of modern culture as something with which he encouraged his readers to engage with creatively and critically. Linton therefore viewed himself and his audience not as consumers of literature, but as commentators and potential participants.

Linton’s journalism in the National and the Odd Fellow was ambitious in its sequencing of extended discourse on specific subjects, a mode of writing that

³⁰ ‘The Principles of the Charter’, OF 23 April 1842, P and V vol. 5, p. 85, 87, 90.

places considerable demands on a reader's retentive capabilities. Linton's confidence in the potential of the working classes inhered in their capacity to be the agents of their own transformation. The sustained nature of Linton's journalism may be read as a response to the spontaneity of the mass platform, an aspect of public discourse which evidently exasperated him during the later of Chartism in the 1840s: 'Neither is it organisation to get so many times abody some few thousand men to meet and applaud speakers who unscrupulously pander to the feelings and impulses of the moment [. . .] there is absolutely no Chartist organisation in the country; really very few men in the country who know why they want the Charter'.³¹ It is precisely this question of the 'why' of Chartism, later condensed by Harney in his phrase 'the Charter, and something more', which Linton was concerned to generate in his readership. His writing for the Odd Fellow took the widening of the reader's cultural awareness as its starting point. This was to become the motivating force behind the style and structure of the English Republic. Viewing Linton's writing purely in terms of its publicist elements would mask an acutely literary awareness demonstrated in his reviews, in which he related literary culture to events in his environment. In promoting Watson's edition of the 'Masque of Anarchy' Linton used the poem to give a sense of contemporaneity to his pacifist message and to indicate intellectual support for universal suffrage: 'The work, however, is not to be looked at in the light of a political essay-except inasmuch as poetry and universal policy are synonymes [. . .] Let his words be graven as divine oracles over the threshold of every political association-that by good means would earn a good

³¹ June 17 1848, P and V vol. 8, p. 35.

and glorious end'.³² The phrase 'universal policy' was sufficiently broad to apply to both a radical outlook and liberal forms of reading. Another indication of the way in which Linton viewed Shelley's poetry was his role in providing Watson with a manuscript of 'Queen Mab' in 1840 for a cheap reprint of the poem which became standard early Victorian edition and a 'signal for renewed popular interest in Shelley'.³³ Linton was also instrumental in using the trial of Edward Moxon and Henry Hetherington for their editions of the poem to release publishers from the threat of governmental prosecution for reprinting 'Queen Mab' and similar works previously labelled as blasphemous.³⁴

Linton's preoccupations in the Odd Fellow journalism informs the verse. The 'hymns' were written and printed between 1839-42.³⁵ The poems across the series vary widely in content, some of which initially seem unrelated to political concerns, such as 'Mists of the Morning' and 'Forest Rights' which begin as descriptions of nature through which the social element is gradually brought in. The explicitly political lyrics demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of Linton's protest verse in the 1840s. They illustrate that what now seems a conventional escape from the pragmatic difficulties of poverty by adopting ballad metre as a way of rendering in concrete form the problems and aims of liberal reformism while offering a representation of poverty as a symbol of the fault lines in contemporary society that was acceptable to the plural tastes of the respectable artisan audience. There are innovatory elements however, such as 'The Two Mothers' which creates a confrontation between two figures familiar to readers of the radical and reformist press, Queen Victoria and a female pauper.

³² P and V vol. 6, p. 114, 115.

³³ Marianne Hunt, to W. J. L., 19 October 1841, Feltrinelli 3/29, Radical Artisan, p. 39.

³⁴ Marianne Hunt, to W. J. L., 9 March 1841, Feltrinelli 3/29, Memories pp. 84-86, Radical Artisan, pp. 38-39.

³⁵ Text from P and V vol. 3.

The narrative is imagined as parallel dramatic scenarios which converge in an inconclusive meeting of monarch and pauper. In Linton's poem the poem thus invites a reader to consider social stratification through the mode of contrast that he had employed throughout the National. The first verse of the poem indicates the economy with which Linton could concentrate his message in the ballad form:

They were two sister-women,-
Two sisters, Christ had said:
And one was Queen of Britain,
The other wanted bread. (ll. 1-4)

The terms suggest the innate equality of the women, and establish the monarch and pauper's representative status as polarities made possible by class distinctions. The apparent inevitability of the biblical parallel ('Christ had said') and its applicability is reinforced by the simplicity of the diction. The regularity of the metre also contributes to the feeling that the pauper's journey to the palace is as ineluctable as the political facts which have made the journey necessary.

The two figures are brought into confrontation, the importance of which is recognised in a biblical echo:

Still sleeps the Prince on gorgeous couch,
The young Queen smileth still:
For palace walls and palace wealth
No entrance give to ill.
Fling wide your gates! your guards are nought,
Your walls are not so strong
As Poverty;-She comes, in all
Her Majesty of Wrong!

And face to face, without disguise,
The Pauper and the Queen
Are met: the Pride of Circumstance
Quaileth before the 'Mean.'
'Give back my child!' The brow of Want

Is dark with vengeful thought-
 Ye sow'd the wind: why deprecate
 The harvest it hath brought? (ll. 25-40)

The poem brings poverty into the palace in a directness of contrast that develops and plays upon the conventions of the contrast poem established in the verbal and graphic representation of society in radical periodicals through the 1830s. The culminative narrative moment of the poem generates a set of unanswered questions which are conspicuously side stepped in the final verse. This lack of closure frustrates a reader's expectations of a resolution, an inconclusiveness that may be taken as a lack of engagement on the writer's part with the reality of poverty, and a parallel uncertainty about the solution in verse. However, as Maidment has discussed, the creative representation of poverty in the 1840s was as problematic for early Victorian liberalism as pragmatic solutions to the same facts, something that is apparent in the complex parliamentary and popular debate that surrounded the Poor Law reforms and the aims of Chartism. However, there may be another way to read this poem rather than as an indication of emotional disengagement or uncertainty. The lack of closure in 'The Two Mothers' may have been a deliberate formal strategy. Inconclusiveness may imply that the burden for the resolution of the events rests within the province of the reader's response, a reading validated by the sudden shift in tone created by the rhetorical question in the final line. The ways in which Linton used inconclusiveness in the content and form of other poems to imply a concept of the reader's responsibility is discussed in later chapters.

Another Odd Fellow poem, 'The Voice of Wat Tyler', plays on the invocatory tone of address prevalent in the early Victorian protest verse to which Linton's National poems made a significant contribution in the context of the

Chartist and socialist press in the early 1840s. It may therefore represent a self-conscious attempt to resolve the tensions with which radical notions of history were fraught: the representation of republican concepts in the language of hierarchy; the expression of peaceful action through aggressive terms; the relationship between the individual achievements of past republicans and the specific requirements of the present, and the efficacy of the 'voice' as an agent of political change. The latter is resolved in the irony that Tyler fails to respond to the demands of the canonical figures such as Milton and Cromwell, but only becomes articulate when approached by the living voice of a modern worker. The adoption of Tyler's voice as a potential influence on the present reflects a notion of historical example as a means of reaffirming the continuity into the present of traditional narratives of self-determination and calls to action. In the case of 'The Two Mothers' the Odd Fellow hymns are closer to the rhythm of speech, unencumbered by the unresolved philosophical anxieties of the National poems.

'Bob Thin', Linton's illustrated doggerel poem, and its sequel 'The Poorhouse Fugitive', written between 1840-43 as responses to the effects of the New Poor Law, tell of the roots of inequality by means of a stylised historical narrative which claims to give 'the origin of what / Is call'd the law of scot and lot'.³⁶ This account of property as an act of dispossession is elided with the notion of modern society as a departure from a natural state of equality and co-operation. Following on from this the narrator gives the story of Bob Thin, the modern representative of honest labour devalued by legislation, government and profit. Bob falls on hard times and, after removing with his family to a poor

³⁶ Linton was writing 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' in 1843. Thomas Sibson, to W. J. L., 30 August 1843, Feltrinelli 4/30.

house, Bob becomes a wandering vagrant. The sequel transports him to an idealised future where he witnesses the celebration of: 'A great deliverance,— from all / The ancient tyrannies of Wrong' ('Poorhouse Fugitive', ll. 557-58).

As a single work, 'Bob Thin' and 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' found a place primarily in the liberal platform of protest and became one of Linton's most well-known works. The purpose and style of the writing in these poems won favour among liberal acquaintances such as his companions in W. J. Fox's circle for its combination of creative aspiration and public discourse: Mary Gillies wrote that 'the mode in which the dreary subject is treated gives one a right to say beautiful [. . .] Bob Thin will do his part in the reformation', and for Mary Howitt the poem 'abounds with that firm spirit of humanity'.³⁷ The poem simultaneously appealed to sections of the radical readership: its doggerel fluency was considered suitable in the context of oral recitation, thus giving it circulation in the domain of public performance.³⁸

The privately printed 1845 single volume edition of the poem would have been too expensive for the majority of the readership Linton ostensibly wanted to reach, but his intentions for a wider circulation, implicit in the form and purpose of the poem, were realised in Watson's cheap editions, some of which survive.³⁹ Reprinting of the poems in the family periodical the Illuminated Magazine in 1845 is a further indication that the poem was intended for a broad audience. Publication of the poem in these varied contexts guaranteed different kinds of reader. A copy inscribed by Linton to 'B. Disraeli Esq. with the Author's respects' suggest that he might have considered following up Thomas Cooper's

³⁷ Mary Gillies, to W. J. L. nd (?1845) Feltrinelli 3/1. Mary Howitt, to W. J. L. nd (?1845) Feltrinelli 3/25

³⁸ Radical Artisan, p. 64.

³⁹ Arts of the Book, SML.

successful presentation of his manuscript of The Purgatory of Suicides to Benjamin Disraeli in 1843-44, but there is no evidence that Linton approached his dedicatee.⁴⁰

The opening sections of the poem, in combination with the rebus-like capitals, condense the 'Norman yoke' narrative of dispossession (Fig. 19). Deployed throughout radical discourse this trope was perceived as a necessary recognition anterior to the specific act of political bargaining and as the principal justification for universal suffrage as the reinstatement of natural rights:

Time was when every man was free
To manage his own cookery:
Whether he got it in the chase,
Or grew and eat it in same place. ('Bob Thin' ll. 3-6)

Central to the account of personal liberty in the poem is an assumption of a Rousseauesque descent of man from 'Nature's gentlest code' (l. 75), in which co-operation and pity had fallen into hierarchy through greed. The introductory section of the poem serves to establish the context for the representative status of the eponymous Bob Thin in this fall from a kind of golden age, a pattern established in the readership by the retrospective elements in the writing of Cobbett, and Horne. The poem is therefore an exercise in playing on the readership's existing familiarity with an awareness of the fabrication of institutions as a way of understanding and changing the present. In Linton's poem what matters therefore is how the extension of the past into the present is imagined, and how the doggerel verse renders the protagonist's life as representative of the relations between the modern labourer and Linton's version

⁴⁰ Cooper, pp. 263-66

of the modern economic system. As an emblem of anti-Malthusian thought, the condition of the weaver figure depended on the combined effects of social, economic and political institutions, whose artificiality the poem emphasised. The reliance on precedent as the basis for justice in the legislative system is identified as creating the fault lines that are described in the poem as class divisions, although Linton's awareness that he was superimposing a model of history onto the past in using Bob as a representative figure carries the suggestion that the vision of the past is understood as such rather than a literal version of history.

The broader pattern of history given in the introductory section is mirrored in Bob Thin as the individual representative of the working classes:

But Bob's was no uncommon case:
He fared like others of his race,
Of the working Pariah caste, who meet ye
In the heart of London's wealthiest city— ('Bob Thin' ll.
256-259).

The verse moves with Bob from one contemporary problem to another, ranging widely over the effects of the New Poor Law and of the changing relationship between labour and capital. In a variation on the contrast idea, the poem at one point imagines a royal visit by the Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury to the poor districts of London. In this section ('Bob Thin' (ll. 282-323) the narrator's mask of naïveté works in conveying a sense that the hierarchy of difference and distinction as embodied by monarchy act as restrictive aspects within society:

To cross the intervening ground,
From Buckingham Palace to Bob Thin's door,
Would take the Royal Coach just one hour. [. . .]
we believe

Our generous Queen is sure to give,
Her famish'd subjects to relieve,
Ungrudgingly, suppose we say,
Out of her thousand pounds a day,
One hundred; and the holy bishop
A tithe out of the profits of his shop,
Split into shillings, and so given,
At the labourer's weekly rate of seven,
'Twould clear some thousand homes of sorrow.
But Queen nor Father'll go to-morrow.
What odds? the Poor-law fills their places ('Bob Thin' ll.
291-300. 314-324)

There are other points in the narrative of 'Bob Thin' where the shift of perspective in unexpected directions creates unusual shorthand ways of looking at the protagonist's circumstances:

No law sets bounds to the landlord's wealth,
Albeit his rent is his tenant's health
Transmuted. ('Bob Thin' ll. 225-227)

The ironic use of ‘transmuted’ in this context conveys a sense of the exploitation founded on the working-classes that Linton saw as condoned and encouraged within liberal economic orthodoxy. The poem thus contains in a single memorable image a complex set of social and economic relations which, rather than a reduction, concentrates the reader’s awareness that financial gain detracts from Bob’s emotional and physical well-being.

After some years in the poor house, Bob becomes a wandering vagrant, at which point 'The Poorhouse Fugitive', begins with the 'delicious whispering / Of gracious Nature's sympathy' (ll. 16-17). Bob has woken to find himself in an idyllic landscape which we are later told is the future:

Where, but yesternight, the road
 Like a desert pathway show'd,
 With its traffic-dust obscuring
 The sweet flowers, of God's procuring,
 Prison'd to its ruléd side,
 Troops of flowers, heaven-eyed,
 Wander now; ('Poorhouse Fugitive' ll. 38-44)

The road in the opening lines acts as an image of the past, now overgrown by nature which has acted to reclaim the thoroughfare from the urban desert. This change in scene between 'Bob Thin' and 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' is matched by a shift in diction, which converts the four stress line of the doggerel in 'Bob Thin' into a lyrical mode that emphasises the musical aspects of language in a sequence of celebratory songs. The opening of the sequel hints that time has passed, but the concluding lines of the poem give a fuller explanation for the transformation of the landscape, the description of which shows the influence of 'Endymion' in the pictorial elements of the landscape.

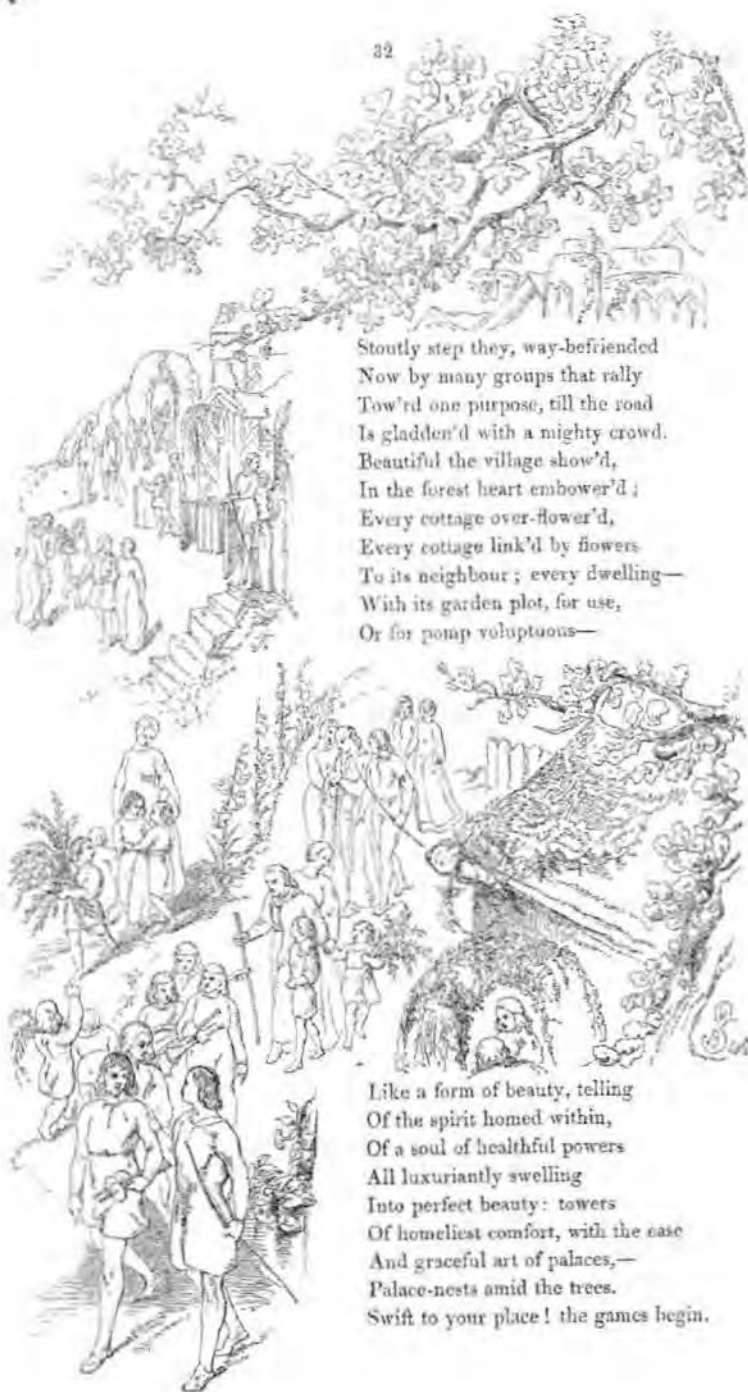
One of the group who find Bob in his new surroundings explains 'How, in the dreariness of old,— / In the world's twilight dim and cold,— / An aged man, her ancestor, / Had fled out of the daily burr / Of dismalest captivity' (ll. 608-611). Like a time traveller, Bob has arrived in a future where the inhabitants celebrate a 'great deliverance' from the 'ancient tyrannies' of 'rank-grown Will', 'sordid Trade', and 'all the errors that belong / To the blind worker for self-gain' ('Poorhouse Fugitive' ll. 557-66). As Bob travels with this group of young people who have invited him to travel home with them, the poem gives a sustained present tense description of water in motion as an image of the 'healthful will':

On
 With the glad travellers! Nought is still
 In life or death. The healthful will
 Halts not, ever companioned
 By strenuous thought, clear as yon rill
 Now with us journeying—lately leapt
 From the o'erhanging mountain-head, ('Poorhouse
 Fugitive' ll. 226-32)

The subsequent account of water in movement is an indication of Linton's attempt to unite his creative aspirations and the social purpose of the poem: the description of the water as an image of organised co-operation becomes an expression of his social concerns:

On, on the waves are driven;
 As o'er us the old mountain voice still hovers,
 And every turn discovers
 New beauty; other streamlets pour,
 Like other minds, their flood of thought,
 Or other beings influence, brought
 From many a distance, hour by hour;
 And the stream swells its volume, and the tide
 Of power is amplified; ('Poorhouse Fugitive' ll. 357-64)

The same kind of language is used for the ideal community in which the dwellings are described as cottages 'link'd by flowers / To its neighbour' (ll. 468-69) and exhibit the 'graceful art of palaces'. The combination of domesticity and ideal beauty in the verse and in William Bell Scott's illustrations (fig. 19) resembles the image of community in George Meredith's 1860 poem 'The Old Chartist', a poem which drew from the millenarian language of the 1840s.



Stoutly step they, way-befriended
Now by many groups that rally
Tow'rd one purpose, till the road
Is gladden'd with a mighty crowd.
Beautiful the village show'd,
In the forest heart embower'd ;
Every cottage over-flower'd,
Every cottage link'd by flowers
To its neighbour ; every dwelling—
With its garden plot, for use,
Or for pomp voluptuous—

Like a form of beauty, telling
Of the spirit homed within,
Of a soul of healthful powers
All luxuriantly swelling
Into perfect beauty : towers
Of homeliest comfort, with the ease
And graceful art of palaces,—
Palace-nests amid the trees.
Swift to your place ! the games begin.

Figure 19. William Bell Scott, artist, W. J. Linton, engraver, page from The Poor House Fugitive (1845).

Bob's speculation as to whether he is dreaming is eventually answered when the group arrive at the festival which celebrates the distant past of competition and social hierarchy:

Hath he the key
Of Faëry turn'd, and changed his state?
Or hath he learn'd the mystery
Of loveliness?— the eye perceives
That only which the heart believes.
The windows of the heart were dull;
Now all around is beautiful. ('Poorhouse Fugitive' ll. 547-53)

This idea of faith as a transforming agency deriving from within, and that images of consolatory nature act as a perpetually renewed inner resource, suggest that the potential for change inheres in the present to which Bob returns. However, this Wordsworthian contemplation of nature sits uncomfortably with the struggle to find solutions to the liberal concerns outlined in 'Bob Thin'.

Linton's idea in the conclusion of the 'great deliverance' from inequality that the future festival celebrates remains idealistic and visionary, which is consonant with the utopian context of the landscape, but this type of resolution has a problematic relation to the nature of the questions raised in 'Bob Thin'. The conclusion of 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' retains its viability within the confines of the musicality of lyricism that shapes the poem, but the description of inner experience as an alternative to the experience of poverty at the end of the second part is not resolved in relation to 'Bob Thin', the implicit purpose of which was to convey a pragmatic message on the conditions of labourers. The idiom in 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' is an attractive combination of rhythm and rapid succession of images, yet in locating an objective correlative of the

traveller's experience in the figure of a journey, the resolution fades into description for its own sake in which skilful rhyming and imagery detract from the urgency of the first part of the poem. In 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' it seems as if Linton was more interested in word play than resolution of the radical programme which is undermined by the descriptive passages conveying a sensation of nature, rendered through close observation. In these sections Linton may have been establishing his credentials as a representational writer with the capacity to marry the real and the ideal. This could be related to Linton's creative aspirations towards producing sustained lyrical descriptions of nature in imitation of Keats. In one sense the accumulation of detail is pictorial in its over-determined finish. The subjects sharpen into focus in the lyrical sections, in which Linton uses the movement of water as an emblem of the creative will, but the idea is stretched beyond the burden of meaning it is meant to bear, leading away from the purposeful tone and narrative drive of 'Bob Thin' toward an idealistic conclusion in which the creative act as consolation collapses in on itself. The weakness of the poem consists of its failure to meet its own standards.

Sympathy with Bob Thin as a representative figure suffers from the character's definition through an authoritative narrative voice. While this aspect of the poem was praised by liberals and radicals alike, it is an instance of how the form has actually worked against the stated intention of the writing in the sense that the delineation of Bob is too close to the generalities of a liberal journalistic portrayal of the condition of England. In treading the fine line between relevance to a broad audience and the particularity of specific representation founded on personal knowledge, experience and insight, Linton erred on the side of generalisation, thus missing his intention of creating sympathy for the weaver

and other types of worker marginalised and devalued by economic conditions. In this sense the idea of a shared working-class history in the figure of Bob suffers from the rift between the symbolic characteristics of the utopian landscape setting and Linton's awareness of the personal effects of political dispossession. Linton obviously struggled to unite the demands of representational fiction and the persuasive characteristics of social criticism. Linton attempted to argue his way out of this problem by adopting the role of doggerel writer, and of the nature poet in 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' to highlight inner resources and individual potential as both the refuge of the unfortunate and the defining characteristics of personal value. Despite its sense of conviction and reasoned argument, there is also a distance from the specific examples that are given as the effects of the Poor Law, a universalising approach that is an instance and illustration of the strength and weakness of Linton's assumption of a position of authority.

However, the poem shows that Linton was a flexible writer who adapted pastiche to different ends. The problem of this approach is encapsulated in the style of the illustrations. Closely related to the verse, the illustrations are more in the manner of textual ornamentation, providing a kind of shorthand for the ideas in the poem. Taken on their own terms they are broad symbols, thus enabling, or justifying, Linton's subsequent use of them for a variety of purposes in children's stories and fables.

The illustrations for the poems were by Thomas Sibson and W. B. Scott, Edward Duncan, with some contributions in 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' possibly by Linton. They were all engraved by Linton, and the blocks always remained in his possession.⁴¹ Linton had planned a collaborative work with Sibson around

⁴¹ The blocks are held, with different printed versions of the poem, in the Arts of the Book, SML.

the same time as 'Bob Thin', a pictorial 'real history' of England in which 'the social life of the English people should be dominant [. . .] instead of by the reigns of kings'.⁴² Sibson's death in 1844 cut the project short, but 'Bob Thin' shares some aspects of this work in its attempt to render English history in the figure of the labourer through time. The structure of the Linton-Sibson history as a sequence of graphic images may have suggested the pattern for the poem as a series of distinct scenes. The distinct difference in style between the two parts of the poem is reflected in the graphic images that accompany the text (Figs. 19 and 20). The self-contained rebus-like illustrations of 'Bob Thin' match the poem's presentation of history as distinct scenes of working-class dispossession, while the closer integration of text and image in 'The Poorhouse Fugitive'

These images shed some light on the intended social meaning of the poem in the sense that the agrarian idealism in the gothic figurative types invites comparison with the characteristics of fable. These features, and the poem's implied appeal to a broad audience, suggest that it may have been intended to be a children's morality fable as much as a public gesture of political protest.

Holyoake later observed that Linton was unusual in the attention he gave to children's literature: 'It was Mr. Linton who, in art, first introduced truth to little children. He held that falsely-drawn pictures in books gave them false ideas of nature [. . .] Mr. Linton was of this way of thinking with respect to children, when no one else was'.⁴³ Holyoake's appraisal of Linton's career also highlights the equivalence of art and truth in Linton's outlook which produced memorable illustrations but limited the creative aspirations in his ambitious writing. The illustrations for both parts of *Bob Thin* indicate Linton's uncertainty about the

⁴² W. J. L. and W. B. Scott, ms eulogy on Thomas Sibson (1845), Beinecke, *Memories*, pp. 67-69.

⁴³ *Warpath*, p. 74.

BOB THIN.



Figure 20. Thomas Sibson, artist, W. J. Linton, engraver, page from *Bob Thin* (1845).

intended readership for the poem. Rather than its technical features or social vision, it is the uncertainty of tone that detracts from the poem's achievement as either fable or protest poem.

The reception history of the poem mirrors the shift in taste away from the narrative poem as a vehicle for reflection on the relationships between the individual and society. H. Buxton Forman's early appreciation of Linton's poem identified a strength in the lyrical elements of 'The Poorhouse Fugitive'. The most recent critical discussion of the poem by Brian Maidment is a reversal of this position. In Forman's appraisal 'Bob Thin' 'is in the lower sphere of detailed economic criticism, having nothing in common with artistic literature', while 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' 'is in the sphere of true poetry [. . .] set in a high key and full of freshness'.⁴⁴ Other contemporary readers preferred the sequel.⁴⁵ This praise of Linton's more effusive writing may be explained by mainstream literary taste in the 1830s which, as W. G. Roe has pointed out in relation to one of Linton's models, Lamennais' *Parole d'un Croyant*, differed markedly from subsequent criteria: 'what nowadays seems ineffective rhetoric appeared in 1834 to literary connoisseurs as fine poetry, and was therefore much more likely to have an influence than we would at present allow'.⁴⁶ Some reviews of the poem indicate that the its self-conscious authoritative universality was successful in courting the approval of a polite readership. This is shown by the terms of the review in the *Literary Gazette*: 'One of the most amusing publications of its kind to lay upon the library, drawing or waiting room table [. . .] [the illustrations] display as much grace and beauty as in general they exhibit

⁴⁴ Forman, 579.

⁴⁵ Anna Hill, to W. J. L., n.d. (?1849) Feltrinelli 3/21.

⁴⁶ W. Gordon Roe, *Lamennais and England: The Reception of Lamennais' Religious Ideas in England in the Nineteenth Century* (OUP 1966), p. 36.

wit and humour'.⁴⁷ In concentrating on the decorative aspects of the poem the ideas of poverty and dispossession have become reduced to amusement, suggesting that Linton's use of fable might have missed its mark in this instance. For a modern reader like Maidment however, the doggerel of 'Bob Thin' defines the poem's literary qualities by virtue of its attempt to 'sustain a detailed historical analysis of the growth of class division and economic oppression' within which the writer 'succeeds in using a vernacular voice to impressive effect', but finds in the lyrical 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' a dissipation of this purpose.⁴⁸

Contemporary reviews of the poem emphasised its broad appeal and social purpose as well as its language. For the reviewer in Holyoake's Reasoner, the poem's eloquence was a strength in the sense that it spoke on behalf of those 'unskilled in the arts of pleading their own cause'. However, the poem's sense of purpose was described in the review as 'higher' than its 'ingenuity': 'With what deep and intense gratitude must such men regard the author of this poem, who brings the riches of art, the fervour of genius, the felicity of wit, the graces of poetry, and the eloquence of humanity to plead the cause of the pauper indignantly scouted from the door of the lordly hall, is now borne by Minstrelsy and Art, laid on the drawing room table and read in aristocratic circles'.⁴⁹ The appraisal of 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' shows how the contrast between the two parts of the poem was accepted as a positive feature in the sense that it contributed to a combination of creative talent and public discourse: 'The second pertains to the higher order of imaginative poetry [. . .] It has the grace of

⁴⁷ Literary Gazette, and Journal of the Belles Lettres, Arts, Science (London) May 30 1846, p. 500.

⁴⁸ Maidment, p. 66.

⁴⁹ Reasoner, 7 October 1846, pp. 253-54.

Lowell's 'Fountain', with the addition of majesty [. . .] The poet's versatility of expression is very marked'. The poem's sense of purpose redeemed it from a pattern observed elsewhere in the Reasoner of the working-class poet affected by the demands of a polite audience: 'polite influences and genteel means [. . .] obliterate the character of the majority of successful men. They seem not to understand that their greatness is to consist in their remaining what they were, in the individuality of their aspirations and exertions'.⁵⁰

Where 'Bob Thin' and 'The Poorhouse Fugitive' fit into this discussion of Linton's creative aspiration and public discourse is that the poems illustrate clearly a tension in Linton's awareness of the partisan uses of language: he had to support a particular viewpoint, which entailed subscribing to the language of radicalism, including all of its slogans, aphorisms and definitions. This is a problematic element in the poetry which moves between propagandist and lyrical, but in this Linton's language shared the prevalent characteristics of artisan culture, which may be characterised in terms of an opposition between narrative writing that aimed to give an accurate, literal view of the world, and poetry that drew from a set of symbols inherited from the radical tradition. In Linton's writing this opposition between literal and symbolic representation is rendered even more marked by his awareness of the necessity for an authorial flexibility. His model of the author had the capacity to respond to conventions that cramped individual potential. The character of Bob, like the illustrations, was conceived of in broad terms, but just as the rebus form of the illustrations limited their value as correlatives for the actual condition of the labourer, so the

⁵⁰ 'The Late Soiree in Honour of Thomas Cooper', Reasoner, 3 June 1846, p. 4.

doggerel form limits the representation of problems experienced by the labourer.

Linton writes freely but remains within the boundaries of the form.

In trying to convey a truthful perception of modern sophistication by adopting a deliberately naïve view of history, Linton's humour seems simplistic, even patronising at times, detracting from the strengths of the poem, such as his use of the vernacular and a flexibility of expression which links the poem to the shifting urban scene. Linton's work throughout the 1840s must be set against the continuing liberal patterns of discourse surrounding social policy at home and abroad, particularly Ireland, which defined the shape of the liberal position on political economy and the role of government in social and economic intervention. Within this context the adversarial nature of the writing accounts for participation in generalised forms of expression rather than individual expression. Linton's responses to these themes were radical in their suggestions, the land, part of a broader attempt at primitive reclamation. The concepts of individual value in relation to a framework of universal rights was central in Linton's poem, but the enactment or exploration of these concepts in verse as an interplay of the universalising tendencies of his radicalism with the representation of the specific characteristics of an individual's mode of existence eluded Linton's skills as a writer.

Linton's career in the second half of the 1840s is marked out by his ambitions towards different authorial roles. He attempted to consolidate a reputation in family and mainstream periodical publishing through editing the Illuminated Magazine and Illustrated Family Journal, and in writing contributions for the Westminster Review and children's stories in pamphlet form, while maintaining a presence in republican or reformist journals such as

the Present Age, Reasoner, Republican, Nation, and his own Cause of the People. Some of the publications for which Linton worked, notably the People's Journal and the Present Age attempted to bridge the expectations of the polite audience and a readership for whom political awareness was second nature. It would therefore be misleading to polarise Linton's writing and creative aspirations in the 1840s as the two extremes of polite and radical language. Indeed, in the 1840s he developed the concerns of his National verse in appealing to different kinds of reader, a process which culminated in the Irish famine-related 'Rhymes and Reasons for the Landlorded' at the end of the decade.

Linton's verse writing through the decade was variable in its qualities of expression. He produced a great deal of verse for the Irish Nation between 1843-46 which concentrated on creating a rational response to political reform in a combative rhetoric. The editor, Charles Gavan Duffy, respected Linton's contributions on behalf of Ireland as 'the testimony of a gifted and true man; worthy to be well weighed', but was exasperated with the sheer volume of writing he expected the paper to print: 'We must again curtail our London friend, "Spartacus", of his fair proportions; but *ex pede Herculem*'.⁵¹ Duffy's truncation of Linton's verse reflects its repetitive nature. Linton later gave one of these unpublished poems, 'Two Million Men', as an illustration of 'how heartily I was in the cause' and as an example of how he thought his writing might have been 'too Irish' for Duffy.⁵² Some of this verse intended for the Nation shows the tendency of the determinate aim of the rhetoric to define and limit Linton's writing.⁵³

⁵¹ P and V vol. 9, P and V vol. 6.

⁵² Ireland for the Irish; Rhymes and Reasons Against Landlordism, with a Preface on Fenianism and Republicanism, (New York: The American News Company, 1867), p. 15.

⁵³ 'Poetry 42-49 not printed', Beinecke.

Most of Linton's writing through the 1840s was printed in newspapers and periodicals which are now difficult to locate outside major institutions and libraries. However, Linton included some of the poems from the 1840s in Prose and Verse. One poem in particular 'Monsters', illustrates the way he approached the leading ideas in educated culture. It appears to have been stimulated by a reading of Vestiges of Creation, from which Linton took Chambers's image of arrested development as an inherent element of broader progression. Typically, Linton gave his starting point as an extract from his source: 'Let us trace this law (of progressive development) in the production of certain classes of monstrosities. A human foetus is often left with one of the most important parts of its frame imperfectly developed; the heart, for instance, goes no further than the three chambered form, so that it is the heart of a reptile'. The poem satirically applies this idea of development to a hierarchical model of community:

I

Poor wretch, arrested on life's path,
 Only pity thee;
 We may not hate whom nature hath
 But formed imperfectly.
 So henceforth, when we look on one
 Who acts a loathly part,
 We'll say-What else could he have done
 With such a reptile heart?

II

There's yonder crowned and purpled Thing,
 That o'er the nation's heads
 Crawleth in the likeness of a king,
 And whereso'er he treads
 Bequeaths a poisonous track of slime-
 Thou change from what thou art?
 How shouds't thou dare a doom sublime
 With but a reptile heart?

Chambers's encapsulation of his theory in the idea of the primitive heart
is continued as a varying refrain

V

Why blame the serf creeps o'er our fields
Where men should walk erect?
Earth's mud its utmost product yields-
What else would you expect?
From sediment of trading lies
What hero thought may dart?
Minerva from Jove's head must rise,
Not from a reptile's heart.

Linton was using a conceit drawn from scientific understanding of progress to illustrate a personal vision of individual potential. He would continue to have a sceptical relationship with scientific theories of human development.

Linton's engagement with contemporary culture continued when he took over from Douglas Jerrold as editor of the Illuminated Magazine between November 1845 and April 1846. Linton had been an engraver for the periodical, and knew Jerrold from his associations at W. J. Fox's gatherings in the 1830s. The Graham episode and his friendship with Mazzini had also given Linton standing in the radical community. Modelled on Punch, the magazine had been mildly radical in content but under Linton's editorship the writing became openly anti-monarchist and used as a pretext for discussing ideas of individual merit. Most of the contributions were anonymous, but Linton identified his pieces for the periodical in Prose and Verse. Many of the articles and reviews show Linton's influence, for instance John Saunders article 'Points for a New "People's Charter"', with its central concerns of universal suffrage, social

reconstruction and permanent solutions for the problems of poverty.⁵⁴ The sub title 'What are we going to do for the people' is answered by the suggestions for an association devoted to providing pleasant communal environment for the poor. The root of the problems are traced to enclosure and the removal of means of cultivation. The article uses Howitt and the decline of communal activities as examples of what is being lost. It is combined with a milder notion of civic and aristocratic responsibility in funding parks and public amenities.

The reviews of Thom's Rhymes and Recollections, The Chimes and Thomas Cooper's The Purgatory of Suicides show that Linton as an editor was catching the popular interest in social responsibility as a theme of modern literature being worked out in other periodicals such as Punch and Holyoake's Reasoner. Linton had met the Scottish weaver Willie Thom at Fox's house. Through the agency of various established figures, Thom had become a minor literary celebrity in 1844.⁵⁵ The review of Thom's Rhymes and Recollections responded to his writing as a concrete expression of working-class experience: 'Thom, can throw the feelings and thoughts of his class into a form and language that can win their way to the hearts of all-those who move in what are called the upper circles of society, would be almost entirely ignorant of the condition of the labouring portion of their fellow-countrymen, as if they were divided from them by oceans, or spoke another tongue'. Thom's writing is a corrective to the statistical information on the poor, by being 'personal narrative', further reinforced by articulation of a poetic of sympathy: Thom's experience is typical and the poetry therefore concentrates communitarian experience into a single

⁵⁴ Illuminated Magazine, vol. 4, p. 17.

⁵⁵ Memories, pp. 172-73.

figure. The inclusion of such a laudatory review clashes with Linton's later assessment of Thom's career.

The review of The Chimes is particularly interesting in the context of Linton's politics. The review found Will Fern's 'eloquent and heart-stirring appeal to the landlord on behalf of the poor labouring classes' to be 'without exception, the best and most dramatic portion of the work', without, however, any reference to Fern's Chartism. The main criticism is on the grounds of viewpoint: 'why show these things to poor Trotty, who can only deplore a state of society he has no power to amend? Had these revelations been made to a rich man, like Sir John Bowley, and been made the means of awakening a spirit of genuine charity in his breast, the moral of the tale must have been acknowledged. True, it might look too like the reformation wrought in Scrooge by similar means; but even better so, than as it is'.⁵⁶ The review thus highlighted the political ramifications of the story.

Given Linton's politics his review of Cooper's monumental Purgatory begins with what appears to be a dismissive remark: 'With the author's political or theological opinions we have not thought it well to meddle'. However, the following sentence shows that he was giving a balanced view of the work: 'Those who stand by royalty and the established faith will give no quarter to his reasonings; while his fellow-Chartists will but the more admire the poet for his stern outspokening, and hopeful prophecy of human liberty and progression'. Thus satisfied with the purpose of the poem, Linton then speaks as a writer also preoccupied with form by concentrating on the diction, 'We must take occasion to object to several awkwardnesses of construction and uncouthnesses of rhythm

⁵⁶ Illuminated Magazine, vol. 4, pp. 170-2.

scattered throughout the poem, such as- “To being merely to destroy by th’ myriad”’. Ironically, Linton’s primary criticism of the Purgatory was of its discursive element, which he termed ‘the excess of polemical argument, of theological reasoning’, on the grounds that this element of scepticism shifted the audience’s attention from the assertions of other proletarian voices in contemporary culture: ‘We are too busy fighting for denials, attacking creeds and dogmas, and establishing our rights of doubt, to recollect the all-importance of faith, as a principle of morality’. One might expect Linton to have been less reserved in his discussion of a similarly self-improved companion in the moderate Chartist programme. However, he was optimistic about the origin of the work: ‘a Government should take heed when its “gaol-birds” sing such songs as that from which we have quoted [. . .] Surely “there is something rotten” when “felony” discourses thus’.⁵⁷

Linton also wrote an early appraisal of Dickens who, in Linton’s view, was more than the popular icon, a ‘delineator of broad comic character [. . .] He is a poet-in the truest acceptance of the word. He is not only a reader of the more strongly marked characters of what is called life, an accurate copier of eccentric physiognomies; he is a hearer and an echoer of the still small voice that cometh from the human heart [. . .] a seer and a revealer of the wondrous affinities and deep harmonies of nature.’⁵⁸ Rather than read fiction as purely representational, Linton found moral resonance in the character of Little Nell. Novelistic fiction in Linton’s review is perceived as a powerful way of conveying exemplary conduct. This view of novelistic writing as a didactic form shows how Linton read fiction as a repository of universal truth.

⁵⁷ P and V vol. 6, p. 112.

⁵⁸ P and V vol. 6, pp. 119-120.

After the failure of the Illuminated Magazine Linton continued to write for periodicals and newspapers. The variety of these contributions shows his flexibility as a writer in adapting his republican ideas to the different purposes and audiences of the periodicals.

Holyoake's Reasoner was an outlet for Linton's writing from 1846, in which he wrote an article on Shelley's politics. Linton discusses Shelley as a poet whose work developed technically but remained consistent in its convictions: 'The opinions of the 'Queen Mab' are not the opinions of the 'Prometheus Unbound'. [. . .] The antagonistic had become artistic'. Apart from showing how Linton read Shelley, the article gives an explanation of poetry as the 'synthesis' of contemporary ideas: 'the poetical [. . .] has pulled down merely that it may rebuild; it has analysed the dead form merely to clear the way for creating a living theory. It has overthrown the creed which was no longer the symbol of anything, which no longer had life or meaning (all creeds having once had life or meaning), in order that it may form for itself an idea of the true and beautiful, and create a new religion, in its turn to be developed and worked out, and, when its meaning shall be exhausted, to be overthrown and superseded'.⁵⁹ Linton was reading Shelley's work as an instance of how a writer's work could be technically accomplished while adhering consistently to a set of convictions, a perspective that reflected Linton's sense of a poet's public duty and combined this with a closer awareness of the flexibility of Shelley's poetry in substantiating and changing an individual's understanding of the world rather than illustrating a fixed model of it.

⁵⁹ Reasoner, 22 July 1846, pp. 119-120, in P and V vol. 6, p. 149.

The aims of the People's Journal resembled those of the National, perhaps because it had the same audience in view. Addressed to the 'working man' the journal set out to 'elevate' through a balance of 'Science, Art, Music, Poetry, and Literature'.⁶⁰ The recurrent political term in the journal is 'self-government' which informs virtually all aspects of it. The function of culture: 'the liberal arts, indeed, cannot accomplish all things: they do not, for instance, construct political institutions [. . .] They are a potent influence for the government of a nation, a potent aid to self-government: and one which can be evoked by the people in their own spontaneous and independent energy'.⁶¹ Linton's articles related to the direct experience of the co-operative principle, such as his reports explaining Mazzini's Italian Gratuitous School which 'afforded me of what can be done by a few earnest men under the most disadvantageous circumstances'. In the context of the journal's aims, Linton gave concrete evidence of his vision of community: article on Adams' Fair Field Works festival, an example of the reciprocation between different social ranks. The works had its own school, founded by Edward Corry, a worker 'with all the modesty of a true gentleman, though not wanting in pride for that he had in his own person so vindicated the dignity of his class. There was none of the vulgar antagonism which makes the workman seem to grudge acknowledgment of help from his world-called superior'.⁶²

The essays 'Honesty', 'Valour', 'Gentleness', 'Self-possession', resemble the verse: individual elements of community cast into compact verse form: 'The Coming Days', 'Self Culture', 'Duty', 'Service', 'Purpose'.⁶³ With its rhetoric

⁶⁰ John Saunders, 'Introduction', People's Journal, 1, (1846), pp. 1-2.

⁶¹ 'Liberal Arts as a Political and Social Engine' People's Journal 1, p. 96.

⁶² P and V vol. 6, p. 157, 163.

⁶³ People's Journal, 1, 1846 p. 52, 83, 124, 182, 274.

of fulfilment and self-conscious language of hierarchy the People's Journal poetry was carefully adapted to its context: 'When man is sovereign of himself and to himself the priest, / And crowned Wisdoms recognise the manhood of the least' ('The Coming Days' ll. 15-16). These poems were consistent in concern but different in tone from the terms of the Nation verse.

A short-lived vehicle for Linton's writing in 1848 was the Republican, subtitled 'A magazine advocating the sovereignty of the people'. The ideas of public discourse in the Republican dovetailed with broad patterns of self-improvement in the surrounding artisan culture, such as the People's Journal: 'reform remains with the people. It is in their hands, and they must do it themselves, or it will not be done'.⁶⁴ However, in contrast to the mild language of the People's Journal, Linton's Republican verse was closer to the combative strains of the Nation: 'Our arms are strong, our sickles keen; / We will not idly stand, / While others reap the golden grain / On our own land' ('An Irish Reaping Song' ll. 7-10).⁶⁵

Linton's review of George Sand's novels was similar to his Dickens review in its moralising reading of novelistic fiction. Matilda Hays's 1847 translation of Sand's work as an opportunity to encourage 'a complete study of the whole'.⁶⁶ According to Linton, Sand was at her best when 'mounting towards heaven' in her novelistic representation of the 'triumph in the individual as in humanity'. Like Shelley, Sand was an ideal of personal insight, 'an example of the devotion, the uplooking, and the integrity, required of those who would assert the right to equality'. The extract Linton quoted from the translation contains many elements of his own writing: 'it was felt from the first

⁶⁴ J. A. Rothery 'Work to do' Republican, 1848 pp. 211-12.

⁶⁵ Republican, p. 205

⁶⁶ Republican, pp. 58-9

that there was in that voice, melodiously sad, but proud and firm, more than an individual inspiration: it spoke the secret of the world around her, the complaint of the age groping onward amid ruins, the aspiration vigorous, though ill-defined, of the coming generation'.⁶⁷

Linton's newspaper the Cause of the People carried the sub title: humanity, liberty, equality. The purpose of the paper was to transform the discourse of Chartism beyond what Linton considered the stage of rudimentary information into the 'organisation' of existing groups versed in the language of liberty and reform and prepared to act upon convictions. Most of Linton's articles were 'corrected' accounts of Chartist meetings from those printed in the Morning Chronicle or Northern Star. The Cause, and the reprintings of material from it, 'helped to spread a detailed, conservative, and calming view of the [1848] Revolution which working men must have found useful when defending the affair'.⁶⁸ However, Linton's relationship with the readership was problematic, as was the perception of his high expectations. One of his associates wrote of the leading articles as the 'ripe fruits of a summer's toil: but the taste of the Chartist body is not sufficiently matured to relish them'.⁶⁹

As Linton's ideals fragmented in 1848, so did his verse writing. Among the optimistic short verse from 1848 is an uncharacteristically confused representation of failed revolution, the 'Dirge of Nations'.⁷⁰ While surviving printed copies in pamphlet form suggest that the poem was intended as a public rather than private gesture, there is an element of personal stress in the poem that

⁶⁷ Republican, p. 59.

⁶⁸ Radical Artisan, p. 80.

⁶⁹ C. Johnson, to William Shirrefs 22 May 1848, Feltrinelli 5, 26

⁷⁰ Written November 1848 (dated draft in NLA). Text from P and V vol. 8, pp. 99-107.

has allowed Smith to describe it as a 'threnody for Europe, and for himself'.⁷¹

The identities of the speakers in the poem are unclear, and it is equally confused as to who is speaking at any point in the poem: the speaker seems to be a Promethean figure, at others a direct address from the poet. The poem is a sequence of truncated utterances, a form that may reflect the fragmentation of Linton's ideals at the end of 1848. This theme of loss paralleled by loss of eloquence does emerge clearly from the poem. The speaker's thoughts on failure return the poem to the struggle with determinism that had lurked in the National poems:

Wherefore should I care to struggle,
Slave to the false smile of Hope,
Whose best promise is a juggle?
How may the prophetic cope
With the Absolute? (verse 14)

This self doubt and faith is only resolved through a conclusive assertion of faith in a better future for republican ideals. Linton identified the collapse of ideals with the fragmentation of the formal structures of verse.

The epigrammatic 'Triumph' is characteristic of Linton's shorter verse contributions to liberal and 'improving' periodicals in the late 1840s:

Ever through the book of ages
The same echoes close the pages:-
Ever loss true gain presages. (ll. 1-3)⁷²

⁷¹ 'To the Future-The Dirge of Nations' (1848), Hay. Radical Artisan, p. 83. According to Neiman, p. 180, the 'Dirge' was printed in the Republican (December 1848), but the British Library copy does not contain the poem.

⁷² P and V, vol. 7.

The poem anticipated the theme that dominated his verse writing in the 1850s: the constructive paradox that the figure of loss forms an essential part of personal and national self-definition. The historical narrative record becomes Linton's source of examples: moments of individual struggle are invoked as the primary means of realising a Mazzinian process of progressive development in concrete verbal terms. 'Triumph' represents an idea of poetry as a compact emblematic reminder of the discursive themes in the periodical while maintaining its qualities as verse. The neat encapsulation of progress suggested in the linear image of time in 'the book of ages' is emphasised by the economical features of the epigram form. This sense of formal closure reinforces the nature of progress as self-evident; the 'echoes' are enacted verbally in the rhyme scheme, and in the repetition of 'ever', and the economically assertive verbs reinforce the tone of certainty. The skill of Linton's short lyrics is to condense the material of received wisdom into a hard-edged verse statement. There is also an aspirational element in Linton's consistent use of the epigram, which naturally lends itself to repetition in the form of quotable, reprinted extracts. In short verse forms Linton could be concise and specific, and this was the quality of his poetry which later commentators such as George Saintsbury found rewarding.⁷³ This tendency has persisted in modern anthologies which include Linton on the basis of his success in epigrammatic compactness.⁷⁴

The potential for verse to create concrete links between loss and continuity, in a relationship that is linear and constructive, locates Linton's political convictions and writing outside the main trends of liberal hesitant

⁷³ 'Lesser Poets of the Middle and later Nineteenth Century' *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, 13, p.187. C.f. *Victorian Poets* (Boston 1876), Edmund Clarence Stedman, *A Victorian Anthology* (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1895).

⁷⁴ *Everyman's Book of Victorian Verse*.

ambivalence about progressive development. Taken at face value, Linton's writing in the 1840s presents a unified belief in the Paineite narrative of natural rights compromised by acts of dispossession at specific points in history, hardened into tradition, and the corollary need for renewal with respect to the land as the prime example and image of the practicality of 'utopian' renewal. Co-existing with this traditionally radical perspective is Linton's increasing interest in the relation of cultural loss to historical reclamation between 1849 and 1850 is a shift in emphasis in his writing from the form of the short epigram toward larger scale narrative poems. While Linton continued to write in shorter lyric forms, particularly for purely private purposes, from 1850 he wrote in sustained verse forms that show an interesting tension between the articulation of the protagonist's personal voice through blank verse and an epigrammatical form of expression which is subsumed within the structure of a longer poem. Linton's poetry in the 1850s becomes concerned with continuity through loss which, while much of it predated In Memoriam, seized on Tennyson's poem as a foil for a poetic enactment of creative action founded on a vision of the past.

Chapter Four: 1849-1855

1849 saw Linton and his family move from Woodford, a London suburb, to Miteside in Lancashire, but he continued to write articles and poems. In relation to this event, Smith presents the move in terms of Linton's emotional and geographical distance from London in this year as at once a creative advantage and a way of sheltering from political action, giving the view that Linton's verse 'gained temporarily a distancing of his imagination that gave his verses new control and bite' while 'literary or poetic action had the further advantage that one could [. . .] stay cushioned from [. . .] practical politics'.¹ From this perspective the anxiety of authorial aspiration and production is intimately related to social position and empowerment. This links to Maidment's account of the significance of reading in the context of artisan perceptions of culture: 'Reading became to some extent a substitute for action, a self-contained political act without further implications'.² This idea of reading as an act in which an individual could feel unified with political change could be extended to Linton's use of his creative and journalistic writing in 1849-50, which was generated in a similarly self-contained context. Linton's awareness of this comes through in his poems which are informed by and concerned with the efficacy of poetic vision as a way of considering and resolving Mazzinian concepts of progress in combination with pragmatic political ideas.

In rural Lancashire Linton was geographically displaced from the centre of republican activity but by the beginning of 1850 he was writing articles for the newly founded Leader newspaper, Harney's Red Republican, and Holyoake's

¹ Radical Artisan, p. 92, 93.

² *ibid.*, p. 37.

Reasoner. Linton's relatively small number of contributions to the Leader were reports on European events, very different from the prophetic strain of the Cause of the People. The articles are matter-of-fact accounts, written in a lively style that conveys a vivid impression of continental republican developments and their immediate political significance.³ Even his article on the Pope's return to Rome in the wake of Mazzini's short-lived republican government remained within the boundaries of informed reportage.⁴ However, the completeness of the surviving correspondence between Linton and other founders of the Leader relates to my discussion of the ways in which he conceived of authorship and status.⁵ The programme Linton described in these letters eventually became the English Republic, and thus led into his discursive and creative concerns in the 1850s.⁶ Through the correspondence we are given insight into Linton's frequent but rarely unambiguous relationship with the mainstream of journalism.

The financial backers of the Leader were W. E. Forster, Minter Morgan, the Christian socialist Rev. Edmund Larken. With the involvement of George Lewes, the project has attracted a significant degree of attention, but Linton restored his role in the founding of the paper in Memories and a late periodical article.⁷ Linton's letters to Larken suggest that he was the main supporter of his idea of the paper as a discursive platform for multilateral development of republican ideas of political reform. Linton's correspondence with Thornton Hunt, the second son of Leigh Hunt, details their ambitious plans for establishing a newspaper which would take up the themes of the People's International League. Linton's association with Thornton Hunt had begun with his work for

³ Leader 30 March, 6, 13, 20, 27 April, 4, 11, 18, 25 May, 8 June, 1850. 27 April, 1850.

⁴ Leader 27 April, 1850.

⁵ Unless stated otherwise all letters in this chapter are in the Beinecke.

⁶ Further references to the English Republic will be given in the notes and the text as ER.

⁷ 'Mr. G. H. Lewes and the Leader', Nation, 27, (1878), 398.

the Spectator in early 1849, for which he wrote an obituary of David Scott later printed in the Art Journal. Hunt's side of the correspondence does not survive, but the way Linton wrote of the episode in Memories suggests that it was Hunt who initiated the contact.⁸ Linton may have recognised a fellow spirit in Hunt's efforts to create a public platform for Mazzini, but the exchanges become progressively antagonistic, revealing Linton's difficulty in engaging with representatives of the liberal press like Hunt and George Henry Lewes.

The tenor of the correspondence suggests that Linton and Hunt's differences stemmed from their respective understanding of broad political motivations as a function of journalism. Linton referred to Lewes's lack of political ideas 'as a drawback for the time being-nothing more', but went onto write that 'it must be our care to imbue him' with them.⁹ Linton evidently viewed himself as occupying a position of equality in relation to his socially and geographically better-placed colleagues. However, he also had problematic relationships with his colleagues in the republican cause. For example, Linton refused Charles Gavan Duffy's offer of a position on the staff of the Nation because he wished 'to remain a free lance'. In Linton's relationships with the Leader and the Nation we see his idea of self-determining independence in action rather than a marked difference of perspective due to class position. What seems from our viewpoint to have been the problematics of class may stem from a modern critical or historical emphasis on the final outcomes of Linton's relationships with figures like Lewes and Hunt. Linton's comments on the predicted audience for the paper indicate an aspirational outlook unconfined by class theory: 'to show the spirit in which I would work, I seek to arouse and

⁸ Memories, p. 119.

⁹ W. J. L., to Edmund Larken, 16 February 1850.

enlist, not the working classes, though the best of them would be with me, nor the ordinary run of politicians, but the most thoughtful and religious of our great men, such as Prof. Newman, Thos. Carlyle, E. R. Larken'.¹⁰ Linton was thus continuing and developing the programme he had outlined in the National.

The purpose of the correspondence from Linton's side was to establish common ground among the other supporters of the project for further discussion on the paper's style and content. His approach throughout the correspondence was to adopt an argumentative tone, beginning with the assumption that Hunt was a receptive and sympathetic listener who shared his aims, giving their respective differences in outlook as the consequence of viewpoint: 'There is at first sight a wide but yet I take it by no means irreconcilable difference between us. Some of the difference may arise from looking at perhaps the same object from opposite points of observation'.¹¹ Furthermore, his expression that they are 'looking at perhaps the same object from opposite points of observation' creates a frame of reference that seemed inherent to Linton's process of writing. For instance, his act of writing as a journalist was inseparable from a tendency to create a context in which growth is made possible through debate. In this letter the tone is conciliatory and shows how Linton attempted to work through differences when the act of discussion seemed to further a common aim. Linton certainly seemed comfortable with the subject of principles and terminology but the subsequent letters demonstrate the difficulty he must have experienced in compressing his dogma for the purposes of liberal journalism, perhaps the consequence of his concept of 'faith' as a defining term for commitment to a

¹⁰ W. J. L., to Thornton Hunt, 11 October 1849.

¹¹ W. J. L., to Thornton Hunt, 9 October 1849.

concept of change initially political in shape and process.¹² The delineation of this faith is Linton's first sustained subject in the letters.

The entire foreign news project proposed by Linton depended upon the blessing of Mazzini, who Linton referred to as 'my most important friend', and the paper's support of 'an active propagandism of the national faith', Linton's short hand for Mazzini's idea of nationality as the first stage in social re-organisation.¹³ Linton's 'cordial' agreement with an earlier statement by Hunt that writers for the paper possessed the 'right to utter any sort of opinion so long as uttered according to artistic task' was underlain by his questioning attitude to the expression of opinions: 'I go with you in this to the utmost extreme. But I do not understand this as the "principle" of our work'. Linton's subsequent comment that 'to be tolerant is not the principle of my life' taken out of context seems to indicate a closed attitude, yet it is typical of this letter sequence that Linton is highly specific in the further explanation of his defining terms: it is the dissection of these terms that Linton concentrated on in his letters. Linton went on to explain that 'intolerance' was his term for commitment to Mazzinian republicanism, but he was careful to stress also the commonly understood meaning of tolerance, 'holding meanwhile [. . .] a tolerance towards all other lives however different their faith':

I would hold my life, my discourse, my deference to others [. . .] to the very extreme of tolerance (under the "artistic" limitation), but to be tolerant is not the principle of my life, nor its aim, nor purpose. This tolerance is in its best form but a negation. (I hope you will understand me) almost righteous negation; but not the principles of life, or action. Life is action, wherefore it requires a

¹² 10 October 1849, and the following letter's response to Hunt's programme for the paper 11 October 1849.

¹³ 10 October 1849.

faith, faith is something as its ideal toward which it works most sternly call it intolerantly if you will.

This notion of commitment was central to his sense of the journalistic voice as distinct, rather than allow it to become identified with a particular institution: 'Your principle must be some distinct idea of your own, not a mere tolerance of others ideas'. This is Linton's self-defined task as a writer. In terms of the Leader, he supported the inclusion of opposing views as long as the individual writer's perspective was recognised to possess the right of differentiation and guaranteed independence, 'our own opinions-should be manifest [. . .] as editorial', although Linton called for this freedom to be inconsistent 'within decorous bounds'.¹⁴ The paper was not, in Linton's view, to be a synthesis into which a plurality of journalistic voices and viewpoints of voices were subsumed, 'Not, fusion, for Nature loves differences', but openly eclectic and responsive to the needs of the readership as an open forum in which the equal validity of reader and journalistic contributions were acknowledged. For Linton tolerance was therefore an attribute of the paper which would be on display rather than an informing principle, thus satisfying the conventional understanding of the term. Linton's further reasoning was that the open forum would delineate republican thought sharply from other forms of radicalism: 'my faith is in the people as the base of the social edifice, in nationality as the first necessary organisation for real, sure, and continual progress [. . .]. This faith I would have clearly apparent; and even to make it clear [. . .] I would open my pages to all shades of view'. In this way Linton reinforced the multiplicity of concerns shared by radical groups. This polyphony, which Linton intended as an

¹⁴ 11 October 1849.

element of a mainstream liberal newspaper, is still an aspect of the Victorian radical press that remains fresh and interesting for modern readers.

The framework which Linton described in his letters insisted on working out the meaning of traditional institutions within the public discursive spaces opened up by a newspaper, an intention partially realised in the English Republic. Linton was looking for a path through social stratification in a way that denied the significance of social position as the centre of reformism, the solution to which lay through reconfiguration of political power. In his intentions he sought to enlist the 'thoughtful and religious', that is, social rank was deemed less important than ideological position. It was an ambitious project that set out to enlist Carlyle into the specifics of political agitation. However, many points in the letters show Linton's shrewd understanding of liberal publishing, and the potential readership, drawing from his editorial experiences over the 1840s. For instance, he recognised the appeal of authority: 'I want to be wide enough to be pleasantly received by the most opposed, to find readers among them; but I am sure commercially speaking that we must be leaders or echoers to succeed'.¹⁵

Linton had been developing the Mazzinian journalistic programme described in the letters to Hunt as scattered notes in his sketchbook since the end of 1848. Despite his relative isolation from London-based publishing after 1849, the letters show Linton's characteristic confidence in the value of a politically conscious readership.¹⁶ The programme was outlined in the second letter and expanded later. The main points build on the successful journalism of the 1840s: reliable foreign news, an illustrated 'real condition of England', which are both

¹⁵ 10 October 1849.

¹⁶ Sketchbook 1848-49, Beinecke.

related to the republican programme. In addition he discussed the potential audience and practical matters of investment and profit figures. Linton offered Hunt a specific explanation of his alternative to the prevalent modes of reporting on Europe: 'even the Times cannot be sure of their correspondents, and that even they can not tell which are the most reliable journals or source of information. This we should manage in connection with the league of democrats throughout Europe'.¹⁷ In claiming that his network of personal contacts could provide reliable accounts of continental events, Linton revealed an eagerness to bring English journalism closer to European popular movements, an example of the proximity of his authorial aspirations to his political connections. 'I look to the real understanding of foreign movements and comparison of ideas so generated for the best instructive lever for uprooting the false English habits of thought upon political subjects'.¹⁸ His relationship with Mazzini and other European republicans would feed into the accuracy of the material: 'I would have all information direct from foreign journals to be depended on [. . .] corrected by foreign correspondents, men known to be true to the cause'.¹⁹

Linton was aware of the contradictions inherent in political motivation as stimulus and centre to an open forum, yet insisted that the alternative of non-committal neutrality or 'indifferentism', such as English non-intervention in the European revolutionary arena, was anathema to the creation of community which valued positive freedoms.²⁰ Linton anticipated and resolved for himself as a writer the problem of dogmatism attendant upon political 'faith' as the basis for expression in two ways; by appealing to the aesthetics of harmony, and by

¹⁷ 2 October 1849.

¹⁸ 10 October 1849.

¹⁹ 11 October 1849.

²⁰ 'The Non Intervention Policy', *Reasoner*, 11 July 1848, p. 25.

creating an analogy with the concept of international unity that sought to preserve unique national identities. The readership 'should see on every number issued the impress of that faith'. The 'impress' represents the identity of the programme which is harmony: 'my faith is in the people as the base of the social edifice. In nationality the solidarity of the people as the first necessary organisation for real, sure, and continual progress; in the fraternal harmonisation (not fusion for Nature loves differences) of nations'.²¹ In the unification of different approaches to the notion of reform Linton hoped to create appeal among church dissenters, socialists, political economists, 'the one all potent bond of union being that, whatever their principles or aims [. . .] they were agreed in this; the necessity of making the English people one body'. This idea of organised unity was to 'pervade the vital spirit of our work. Politics, Art, Literature, all harmonised to that aim'.²² The harmonisation of different perspectives was at once an analogy and a journalistic reflection of national individuality within a unified international community conceived of within the terms of the People's International League. The starting point for Linton's project is the journalistic representation of the present 'condition' of society 'from the actual state of things I would step to that [. . .] I want to unite the people, to form a party to grapple with the actualities [. . .] The present condition of society, the present circumstances and prejudices of men must be our point de départ'.²³ In this project the journalist is a bridge, an 'apostle', between a particular commitment to Mazzinian republicanism and alternative perspectives. This was one of the early sticking points with Hunt, the role of the individualised voice within the paper, 'what would you say to a painter who said,

²¹ 10 October 1849.

²² 11 October 1849.

²³ 10 October 1849.

the idea, the principle (I use these words “idea”, purpose, aim, to show you more clearly the meaning I am attaching to your word “principle” in the use you have made of it) of any picture is the allowance of everybody’s way of painting [. . .] Be bigoted to no manner, to no rules of other painters, take your advantage of them all, but your principle must be some distinct idea of your own, not a mere tolerance of others ideas’.²⁴ The author, for Linton, acted as a bridge between a demonstrably coherent set of ideals and the readership, ‘I will not be a journalist except I may be an apostle, not I trust without an apostle; tolerance for every varied manifestation of God’.²⁵ Linton’s analogies of structural unity emphasise the constructive implications of individual growth and cultural continuity ‘[republicans] want life-its individual manifestations, and its aggregate ordering to be an artistic thing, the whole representing an idea, all the parts in keeping’.²⁶ Linton was explaining himself in terms of artistic unity. ‘I want to do something of what the Irish “Nation” aims to do-but more comprehensively, less antagonistically, more artistically. I neither want to dethrone the Queen, nor to run amuck at the worst of our institutions. I want rather to preach truths than to attack falsehoods’.²⁷ Accordingly existing institutions are left alone in favour of opening up a discursive space in Linton’s proposals for a debate forum: ‘the most opposed should have no fear of wanting an arena while I had a page fairly vacant for him’.²⁸ He was here following up his experience of the editorial practice of radical periodicals.

Linton’s architectural analogies throughout the correspondence are an instance and illustration of his urge to explain the reasons why the paper could

²⁴ 10 October 1849.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ 11 October 1849

²⁸ 10 October 1849.

provoke a widespread interrogation of the prevailing terminology of reform. In Linton's view this type of enquiry formed the basis for politically conscious journalism: 'Simply I have learned the necessity of building from a foundation [. . .] however much and universally I may endeavour to win proselytes to those views, I shall not be thrusting those views under men's eyes to the hindrance of getting the foundation laid'.²⁹ The ways in which the press defined popular conceptions of reform was a pressing aspect of Linton's programme because he felt that mainstream journalism created a misleading idea through partial examination of the guiding assumptions of republicanism: 'the Times is "reforming", and the Spectator. But does anyone dare guess even what definition either could give to that word "reforming"? I have shown you my meaning of the word, so far as the first chapter goes-which is universal suffrage'. The correspondence is also a clear illustration of how Linton organised and thought of his role as a journalist and how he systematised his programme before engaging in a project. This is partly the consequence of what we can take to have been Hunt's definition of reform, and of what Linton evidently considered the self-limiting aspects of Hunt's proposals for the paper. This emerged in the disagreement over the prospectus.³⁰

Linton was aware that his idea of the paper placed significant demands on the projected audience which is why he stressed the 'condition of England' material. As in all his other projects the republican plan adumbrated a broader, flexible vision of how society might organise itself, the 'first chapter' of which was universal suffrage. Linton agreed with all of Hunt's proposals but added his

²⁹ 10 October 1849.

³⁰ 11 October 1849.

own notion of 'politics, art, literature all harmonised [to] the idea of the organised nation'.³¹

What emerges in Linton's side of the correspondence is a notion of the newspaper as a vehicle for a discursive programme growing organically out of a set of principles which Linton arranged in the form of a system of belief. The letters show the formulation of ideas that would be fully developed in ER, which was itself the product of Linton's failure to weld the Leader to what he considered the potential of a newspaper beyond its commercial purposes. The writers Linton constantly quoted in his own writing informed and to a certain extent created his self-conscious interrelation of political 'faith' and journalistic writing. His comments throughout the Leader correspondence were an expression of confidence in the creative capacities of journalism as a vehicle for political change, principally because for Linton individual creativity was bound up with the political recognition and realisation of individual potential as the basis for social justice through individual liberties previously established and defined. An instance of the creative consequences of the political motivations in Linton's writing was the centrality of universal suffrage as the prerequisite to the kind of society founded on individual potential. Linton saw the development of individuality as the reason for and result of his particular concept of republicanism: 'I sum up [republicanism] as individual growth [. . .] In a democracy equality is the end. In a republic equality is but the beginning—the ground of growth'.³² The way in which 'equality' is conceived of as a prelude to 'individual growth' underlines for us that Linton understood individual

³¹ 11 October 1849.

³² 10 October 1849.

fulfilment and creativity as an essential function of reform rather than separate from politics as a system of change.

In February 1850 he was telling Larken of his disappointments over the prospectus for the paper.³³ By this time Linton had found other vehicles for his writing; he joined with George Julian Harney on the Red Republican for which he produced an illustrated satire on Lord Brougham and a translation of Mazzini's Republic and Royalty in Italy. When the Red Republican ceased Linton continued to supply copy to its successor, the Friend of the People in which his 'Rhymes and Reasons for the Landlorded' were printed in a couple of months before their inclusion in the first ER in January 1851.

The personally important theme of continuity of utterance emerges in the 1850 poem 'Eurydice', first printed in the Present Age, a temperance journal in which Linton printed the 'Republican Principles' and various articles, essays and short poems between 1846 and 1850.³⁴ The poem works within the same framework of self-energising hope that informs the ER poems but in a very different creative context.

Under the guise of myth the poem spins out a brief moment of lamentation in which a compulsive and repetitive process of grief converts itself into hope. The poem explores the way in which Orpheus constructs an almost solipsistic world of feeling where the loss of the beloved defines all aspects of his experience:

³³ W. J. L., to Larken, 22 February 1850.

³⁴ 'Eurydice' Present Age: Or Truth Seeker, September 1850, pp. 233-238. Text of 'Eurydice' also in P and V, vol. 8, and Claribel.

From out the thick shade of a laurel grove
 (Crowning a little knoll of sacred ground,
 Like to a wreath forlorn hung o'er an urn,)
 Issued a dim and melancholy voice,
 The tender air infecting with sad breath. (ll. 1-5)

This first emblem-like image opens up the idea of the repetitive elegiac enclosure in the rest of the poem, reinforced by the shift of tense in 'infecting', which creates a reciprocal relationship with the words on either side of the word. Furthermore, the five stress line in the first paragraph is subdued into a falling pattern which complements the feelings described. In Orpheus's lamentation the natural world is fashioned as a store of images to describe Eurydice's transformation into an anima figure. Linton's textual ornamentation of the poem in Claribel played on this aspect of the closing relationship between Orpheus' utterance and his view of the world by having the graphic elements of the page intrude into the text (Fig. 21).

For Orpheus, language has the capacity to circumscribe Eurydice, but only in correspondence with landscape elements. In this process the speaker gradually comes to terms with his loss through language, as if unbroken utterance possesses the capacity to reanimate. However, the same landscape elements that keep the spirit of creativity alive also lead to a sharper awareness of loss:

Eurydice! the future as the past
 Is buried in thine urn. I have no hymn.
 The torches are extinguish'd; the drear sea
 Moans in the gloomy hollows of its caves. (ll. 78-81)

Silence becomes equated with a sense of defeat which the speaker's relationship with nature has become a monologue where nature as a source of consolation is called into doubt. A way out of this closed relationship is offered



EURYDICE

(“Ompheng” Sweetest Song.)

FROM out the thick shade of a laurel grove
(Crowning a little knoll of sacred ground,
Like to a wreath forlorn hung o’er an urn,
Issued a dim and melancholy voice,
The tender air infecting with sad breath
The yellow leaves dropp’d down the falling light,
The autumn wind crept slowly through the boughs
The wind and falling leaves with low sweet tones
Echoed that plaint, till the great pulse of life
Seem’d but the ebb and flow of one long sigh,
“Eurydice! Eurydice!” was all
The burden of that sorrow; but anon
These words came sobbing forth from a burst heart,
Gushing in full flow of abandon’d grief,
Like the low pining wail of Philomel.

Figure 21. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from Claribel (1865) showing the text of ‘Eurydice’.

in the form of hope deriving from the exertion of will against fate. The elegy outlines the grief rather than resolving it, the resolution is effected by the intervention of an external speaker:

The Past returns not. Look no more behind!
It is a phantom. Rather let thy song
Mount as a pyre-flame up into the heavens.
O Constellated Beauty! thou art there.
Not on the earth, nor with the buried Past (ll. 192-196)

The conclusive frame changes the direction of the utterance into the kind of mystical resolution that displaces personal grief into speculations about hope as a concept. 'Eurydice' shows that Linton's search for an eloquent lyrical voice found fulfilment in elegy where the past as a static presence could be explored through an emblematic landscape.

The plans for the Leader, the 'Rhymes', and the 'Republican Principles' in the Red Republican series of essays formed the main strands of the ER, the account of which in Memories reinforces the view that the journal was begun in the same spirit with essentially the same intentions as the Leader.³⁵

When Linton reflected in 1894 on the reception of the ER it is interesting that, of all the responses to the ER, he recalled Carlyle's:

Why waste my energy in useless speech? – was the one burden of [Carlyle's] remonstrances, and he would not have cared had I pleaded the influence of his example. Like him, I was bound to speak, without the warrant of his genius, but with a more prophetic hope. I failed. Some words may yet have echoes. Some few feeble attempts at republican association of a few working-men, in response to a plan of action from which I looked for results, showed me that I might teach, but might not lead.³⁶

³⁵ ER 1851, pp. 10-34. First printed in the Red Republican, 21 September-30 November 1850.

³⁶ Memories, pp. 127-128.

By teaching Linton meant the spread of republican ideas through print, the reception of which took place in the reader's private space. Failure is an impression created by Linton's account, partly because he was emphasising his awareness of the disparity between the intention and the long-term effect of the ER. However, when Adams wrote to Linton on behalf of the Cheltenham Republican Association he encapsulated the value of Linton's writing for the artisan readers in its combination of 'inward' creative aspiration and the 'grand ideas' public discourse: 'no labours of ours [. . .] can be scarcely sufficient remuneration for the most inward satisfaction which all who have ever comprehended the real merit of those grand ideas'.³⁷ Adams went on to be the ER's printer, and continued to promote Linton's work through his editorship of the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle in the 1870s.

Like the National, the ER was a multi-layered account of republicanism, embracing sources of experience broader than those Linton could offer as an individual. James Dearden's articles about Linton's activities at Brantwood highlight the scarcity of the periodical.³⁸

The ER had minute circulation, but this is offset by the variety, discursive range and relative significance of its content and its contributors, among whom were Alexander Herzen, Wendell Phillips, Eliza Lynn, Thomas Cooper, Gerald Massey, and Walter Savage Landor. Well into old age, Linton remained proud

³⁷ W. E. Adams and others, to W. J. L., n.d. [? 1850], Feltrinelli 2/3.

³⁸ Dearden divides the five-year run into five volumes, but existing bound volumes show that Linton thought in terms of four volumes. Janowitz relies exclusively on Linton's selections in P and V as a sole primary source for the poetry, ample evidence that a consistent form of reference is difficult to establish. In this chapter the 1851 page numbers refer to a single volume copy in Newcastle University Library. For 1852-53 page references are from a single volume, consecutively paginated, in the British Library. Material from the 1854-55 run is taken from a single volume in the British Library, with additional material from P and V.

of the contributions Landor made to the ER, and Landor's dedication of the 1853 Imaginary Conversations of Greeks and Romans to Linton as 'A true patriot and a true poet, / characters almost equally rare'.³⁹

The ER bears a close resemblance to Linton's previous editorial work in the combination of journalism and verse writing. In its intentions the periodical was ambitious in its synthesis of streams already current in the radical world. The initial pragmatic purpose of the periodical was to be an informative and contentious centre for a future republican movement in English politics, a channel for the European stream of republicanism, 'by making my countrymen acquainted with the views of Republicans abroad, and giving them correct versions of the current events of the great European struggle for Republicanism [. . .] and not omitting to remind them of their own old republican wisdom when England taught the nations how to live [. . .] Desirous, not of renewing the form of Puritanism, but of revivifying the soul of earnestness which marked the brief day of our commonwealth as the grandest period of English history, I shall essay to show wherein we Republicans of the nineteenth century may imitate the worthiest of our race, in what we ought to advance beyond them; and so I would in some way help to establish a Republican Party, really a Young England, to be the heralds and leaders of the Republic, the beginning of the future Nation'.⁴⁰

The idea of history as an universal presence is central in Linton's language because the constructive intention of his model depended on cumulative cultural achievement, an idea that was elucidated in the ten sections making up 'Republican Principles': 'What is the meaning of all history, if it is

³⁹ Memories p. 126. Landor's contributions to ER 1854: 'On the Fast for King Charles' Martyrdom' p. 80, 'Death of Blake' p. 231 revised after reading the earlier biography of Blake in ER (182-87), 'Mitchell and Meagher' p. 344, 'Dream of Sevastopol's Fall' p. 380.

⁴⁰ ER 1851, p. 4.

not this?-that the struggles and sacrifices of one generation are made for another [. . .] that a gain in any corner of the world spreads, slowly or rapidly, over the whole globe [. . .] How shall one isolate himself from the Future or from the Past? How form the Future, when not a deed he may do, nor a word he may utter, nor a thought that stirs his innermost soul, but is as the first touch upon the electric wire, repeating its consequences to future ages?'⁴¹ Linton elaborates this with reference to the Englishman's cultural origins and the successive contributions made by each racial change, but particularly received literary culture: 'Is not his mind somewhat richer for he thoughts of all time [. . .] Which of us is not indebted for some of those high-soaring and holy thoughts, which light even the darkest hearts [. . .] to the buried poets and prophets of Humanity?'⁴² Individual reflection is central to his argument of society as a developing identity, but the relationship between thought and the world is pragmatic: 'Man is one; thought and action ought to be indissolubly united in him. At the end of each day each of us must be able to ask himself without blushing, not *What hast thou thought*, but *What hast thou done* to-day, for the holy cause of truth and eternal justice?'⁴³ Cultural achievement is therefore the cumulative product of history, but Linton is careful not to limit the cumulative 'struggles and sacrifices' to material progress, but he extended the history of cultural development to include the past and possible future moral renewal in which individual creative capacities and potential could flourish.

In Linton's vision of the republic self-fulfilment is identified with elective duty, selfishness being transmuted through the satisfaction and training of the child's natural inclinations before entry into social responsibilities. Progress

⁴¹ ER 1851, p. 113.

⁴² ER 1851, p. 113.

⁴³ 'To the Peoples', ER 1851, p. 8.

consists of the fulfilment of individual abilities in an atmosphere of benevolent equality: 'an association in which the tyranny of a centre shall be impossible, in which the fullest growth and widest range of the individual shall be held compatible with the most devoted service to the Republic'.⁴⁴ Underpinning Linton's interpretation of cohesion and individuality is the development of the child; 'The child lives for itself: is (*or should be*) employed, not for Humanity, but for itself. The natural course of a child's life is the perception, the search, and the gathering, of good for itself, in order to perfect its own nature, to prepare it for serving Humanity. To his end parents and friends wait upon it, and minister to it, requiring no return. [. . .] the sacrifice of Self (that is to say-*service*) is next. The child *enjoys*-the adult *loves* [. . .] The lovers are united, and the two becoming one, in their very union is danger of stepping back to selfishness; but now children teach the doctrine of sacrifice of duty and service. In these two relations of life are the types of the *present, and future*, in which is involved the whole of human duty [. . .] In one's family are first learned the lessons of true Republicanism: the equality between the loving-the equal rights of the young souls which we call our children, but which are God's children, even as ourselves, not property'.⁴⁵

In Linton's understanding of the future direction of republicanism, English nationality, and the idea of the nation state, are intermediate but concrete identities, defined according to a set of normative definitions that derived from Mazzini. The shape of the republican society is defined in a sustained and coherent sequence of essays and extracts that concentrate on the cultural dimension of community, with particularly sympathetic and detailed attention

⁴⁴ *ER* 1851, p. 114.

⁴⁵ *ER* 1851, pp. 15-16.

given to education. Linton maintained that principles needed to be worked out prior to their realisation as social constructs 'Principles are truths independent of us'.⁴⁶ An over-arching conclusion is thus presented in outline, the rest of the argument functions to show how the republic might be attained. This pattern of aspiration towards a defined end is the classical utopian element of the ER but it may be argued that a determinate end in sight limited the scope of Linton's poetry. In an intellectual climate of uncertainty and hesitance, Linton had to emphasise coherence and use the language of construction to distinguish his interpretation of a republic from other models, particularly those growing out of Chartism. Constructiveness also suggests an intention to create an inclusive readership.

The ideology informing the model of community in the explanatory sections of the journal is Mazzini's, but in Linton's personal elaboration of these concepts the idea of creativity within the republic takes on a specificity of meaning that the Northern Star series 'The Politics of Poets' had struggled to express. For example, in response to a correspondent's insistence that 'the mere political is of little consequence', and that the 'humanizing influences' of poetry 'upon the masses is far more needful' Linton resolves the binary opposition in terms that are clear and convincing: 'A is right in his high estimate of poetry and art; but how make these most accessible to the People? This we believe can only be done through a thorough political revolution [. . .] A would have the higher-natured devote themselves to the worship of Beauty-which is Truth, which will sometimes lead them from the study to the battle-field [. . .] to the daily strife between slaves and tyrants [. . .] For Art is not worshipful for its own sake, but

⁴⁶ ER 1853, p. 175.

because it ministers to Humanity', politics are 'the application of God's law in the government of the world'.⁴⁷ In many ways the recurrent elements of the spoken voice in the poetry suggests the possibilities for poetic forms of expression to restore the sense of commonality of suffering and therefore create sympathy for marginalised parts of the community, such as the Irish peasantry.

With renewal and history as central elements of the periodical, and the pragmatic intention of translating principles and ideas into actions, the verse served a specific end within the journalistic context, and the act of writing about the present in terms of the (notional) past informed the nature of Linton's creative choices in the verse; the discursive themes play against ideas in the verse. However, because Linton viewed his humanitarian themes as unfettered by party politics, he assumed the office of poetry to possess an equally universal appeal. The tradition of English and European poetry, continued by Victor Hugo, was a reflection of these universal principles, just as the historical narrative and the achievements of individuals within the narrative was used by Linton to illustrate a notion of progressive development.

Much of the verse in the periodical was republished in different contexts, either by Linton himself, or in more widely known and read publications. Read in its initial context the poetry is linked into a programme of republican reform, and consolidates Linton's intention to introduce a critical awareness of foreign news, in which contemporary events are viewed in terms of the past. However, the poetry takes up several purposes and implies different kinds of reader. The verse set out to be read not only as part of a journalistic presentation, but part of a unified scheme of expression in which a model of society is built up sequentially

⁴⁷ ER 1851, p. 250.

to work out how individual responsibility relates to community. Linton is using verse not only as a means reiterating the journalistic programme, but as a way of realising Mazzini's concept of the unification of 'word and deed'. Furthermore, in the modes of address, the alternation of collective and singular voice, and in the variation of forms, Linton set out to be inclusive in appeal.

The 1851 run of the ER displays the full range of verse forms that Linton had experimented with in the 1840s; song, epigram, narrative and lyric. His method of linked poems underpinned the use of verse supporting, and supported by, a sequence of arguments extending beyond a unilateral, politically motivated perspective. As a body of work, the variety of forms in the ER of 1851 are presented as different facets of the same object. Like so many of Linton's shorter poems, they suffer from paraphrase and selective quotation. Consequently the texts are here given in full.

The eight verse poem 'Cromwell's Statue' encapsulates the themes, language and purpose of the ER and its poetry.⁴⁸ The poem plays out an interchange of oral and literary forms by stringing together a four stress with a three stress line which when separated sound like common measure, but placed together they give the typographical impression of a seven stress line:

Where shall we place his monument, the effigy sublime
Of England's Victor Rebel, her Worthy, for all time?
That Englishmen may worship him, with as undaunted
brow,
And say-Where Cromwell dared to lead, we dare to follow
now. (ll. 1-4)

⁴⁸ ER 1851, p. 362. Printed as 'The Place for Cromwell's Statue' in the Red Republican, 22 July 1850, p. 48.

In creating a long metrical unit the synthesis works to convey and reinforce the theme of continuity inherent to the poem's subject. The poem leads the reader through a consideration of different possible sites for the statue. By the sixth verse the statue has shifted from literal figure to symbol in a way that makes the conclusion seem inevitable. This conclusion suggests that the most meaningful site for the image of the first republic would be both an inward and outward location: the statue as a symbol belongs not only in the physical space, 'on that field, new-sown with fame, whose margin is the sea- / Our Home' (l. 31), but is identified with the poet's aspirational hope of rational unity in the present, 'when deeds have clench'd your words, / When ye have tamed the tyranny of England's felon hordes' (ll. 29-30).

The poem also explores the relation of past to present in its sequential placing of the statue in locations which bring out different aspects of the monument's functions as guide, model, reminder, and warning to the present.

There are two verse sequences in ER; a series of witty epigrams entitled 'Modern Monumental Inscriptions', and the 'Rhymes and Reasons Against Landlordism'. The 'Rhymes' include six poems printed in Ernest Jones's Friend of the People as 'Rhymes for the Landlorded' in late 1850, a few months before the first number of the ER. Most of the 'Rhymes' are written in a type of ballad metre, but they alternate with verse written in a more personal, innovative structure that matches its utopian strain: 'Our Heritage', 'The Consecrated Land', and 'The Happy Land'. The latter two are similar in lineation, and all three use the five stress line.

The narrative strand within the 'Rhymes' consists of poems which take up and respond to or develop the theme of a previous poem, creating a sense of

continuity within the sequence in a movement toward a pre determined conclusion, reflecting the utopian preoccupations of the periodical. There are other unifying features; images of renewal through recurrence of red and gold, and the reiteration of the narrative of dispossession.

The 'Rhymes' set out to renew a reader's awareness of continuities between past and present. The series represents Irish and English tenantry as extensions into the present of historical acts of dispossession, projecting the Irish famine into the domain of universal rights. Like the rest of the ER, the poems set out to be a closer vision of the condition of England:

The following series [. . .] is intended as an exposition of the various mischievous phases of Landlordism, and a running commentary thereon [. . .] The illustrations will mostly be from Ireland, because there the monster Landlordism shows itself most hideous; but the reader should bear in mind that the evil principle is the same both in Ireland and England.⁴⁹

The particularity suggested in the method of contemporary 'illustrations' as 'a running commentary' is matched by a broader argument involving the 'phases' of land ownership through time.

A corollary to this idea of 'illustrations' might be found in his 1849 Westminster Review article on illustration where Linton likens the function of illustration to a written commentary that clarifies a text, much in the same way that he used verse to supplement the contemporary reader's existing awareness of the famine.⁵⁰ The poems reinforce their 'illustration' of the famine through their original context because they deal with it as a 'condition' question, that is, a matter for close discussion in relation to broader questions, an approach which

⁴⁹ ER 1851, p. 92.

⁵⁰ 'Illustrative Art', Westminster Review (1849), 134-46, in P and V, vol. 8.

bears close resemblance to Carlyle's method in Chartism. The act of universalising the contemporary theme of famine involves invoking the radical explanation of landlordism as artificial privilege through the accumulation of precedent over time. The 'Rhymes' therefore set out to interweave the contemporary and the universal. These themes assume emblematic characteristics in Linton's treatment of them; the poems resemble verbal versions of images from the Illustrated London News in the sense that they claim derivation from direct observation of the present, but are actually highly formulaic in execution. Comparison with contemporary graphic journalism is intended to raise questions about what a contemporary reader would have accepted as conventional shorthand in the service of a wider truth.

In Linton's poetic version of the Irish question in the 'Rhymes', the facts and consequences of private land ownership inevitably involve human value and individuality, articulated in the language of human value as a common sense notion in 'Our Heritage', the second poem in the sequence.

God's gift, the Land, our common heritage,-
 To Adam and his seed, and not entail'd
 Upon a few:-what deed hath countervail'd
 That tenure handed down from age to age?
 God's only curse is labour: with the sweat
 Of honest brows to earn the fruit of toil.
 He plagued us not with landlords, to despoil
 The labourer of his God-acknowledged debt.
 Parcel the measured ocean; fence the air;
 Claim property in clouds and spray-topp'd waves;
 In sun and stars; in heaven, as in our graves:
 If thou art earth-lord, Tyrant! and God's heir.⁵¹

⁵¹ ER 1851, p. 349.

The biblical strand in the poem acts as a background to the theme of land ownership, but its use in the poem does not suggest that questions about land and labour may be resolved through a literal interpretation of scripture. There is an element of Linton's customary worrying at the disparity between Christian principles and practice in this poem, but the intention and success of the poem is in its laying bare the guiding principles of land ownership, thus introducing the value of rational discourse in relation to the theme of the origins of property. The third poem, 'The Consecrated Land', encourages a reflective response to the theme of land ownership which, like 'Our Heritage' acts as a foil to the colloquial expression of the first poem, 'Landlordism'.

'Our Heritage' and 'The Consecrated Land' are two of the three departures from the ballad metre and directness of 'illustrative' aim. In these poems the form is tighter, with the consequence that the expression of the ideas is more responsive to the specific direction of the meaning. They elicit a reflective response in their fluency of figurative language and imagery, and hint at the diversity of readers that the 'Rhymes' successfully embrace.

The consecrated land!-
 Our fathers' and, alas! our children's grave:
 Growing from out their hearts the wild flowers wave
 O'er that dear earth, and on it yet doth stand
 The poor man's shrine.
 What prince dare lay his hand
 On this, and say "'Tis mine"?
 Is not our martyrs' earth
 Held sacred too?-not merely the low ditch
 Where kings can fling them, but the wide land which
 Should be more than the grave-stone of their worth.
 Where Emmett and Fitzgerald trod,-
 What peer can own that earth?
 None-none but God.
 The "consecrated" soil!-
 Is not the round earth God's,-his sacred field,

Where Man may learn celestial arms to wield,
 And grow divine through sanctity of toil?
 What landlord dare
 To dispossess God's seed? what power shall spoil
 Those whom God planted there? ⁵²

The long sentencing of the rational argument, best elicited through performance, is unified by a subtle sense of rhythm and versification in which the blank verse line is broken up to attenuate the sense of the poem. For instance, the powerful image 'Growing from out their hearts the wild flowers wave / O'er that dear earth' acts as a compact emblem of past suffering persisting in the present. But the shift from the forebears' grave to the 'heart flowers' image creates implied links between the past and the present, loss and potential renewal. The connections between the image of the heart flowers, the 'dear earth', and 'on it yet doth stand / The poor man's shrine' are suggested rather than stated. That the 'shrine' 'yet doth stand' indicates that the past remains unquestioned, and unresolved. The land is populated by emblems of continuity, rendering the rhetorical question 'What prince dare lay his hand / On this, and say "'Tis mine"' all the more poignant. These stylistic features point towards the meditational nature of lyric verse, in the sense that figurative constructions encourage interpretation in the sustained process of private reflection and re-reading, leaving room for a reader's meditation. 'The Consecrated Land' bridges the personal and technical demands of lyric verse and the 'illustrative' nature of the theme. The poem related to Ireland, but it also stimulates reflection upon the broader ideas of property and self-fulfilment. Political and personal readings are as equally viable as performative and private realisation of the poem.

⁵² ER 1851, pp. 93-94.

Other poems in the series tend to satirise the concept of private land ownership through caricatures of aristocratic vested interest. ‘“From the Centre Upwards”’ plays received ideas, often voiced in the form of proverbial wisdom, against abstract rights and personal observations in a manner that links in with the pragmatic terms of that month’s articles on the organisation of labour and the land:

If Puddledock can vomit truth,
 Or truth be venom’d lies, —
 If Russell-Castlereagh know ruth,
 Whig statesmanship be wise, —
 If butcher’s meat grow wholesomer
 By dint of carrion flies, —
 King Property owns earth and air
 From the centre to the skies. (ll. 1-8)⁵³

The tone of protest is often strained, but gains force from the contrast through the alternation of tone from protest to lyrical expression:

No urchin his red lips shall smear
 With autumn’s luscious prize;
 No milkmaid stint her song to hear
 The lark that heavenward hies:
 ’Tis theft, Sir! theft: wild fruit, wild tones,
 And wild flowers’ varied dyes,
 Are grown on Lordling’s land, who owns
 From the centre to the skies. (ll. 17-24)

The interplay of common sense notions of value, articulated within a rational framework, and the emotive elements of verse, draws from the forms of seventeenth century verse where Linton found a balance between subject, form and impersonality of voice. The title ‘Rhymes and Reasons’ points to this twin strand; rhyme; song, emblem, decoration, artistry: reasons; logic, rights,

⁵³ ER 1851, p. 120.

discourse. This element of the 'Rhymes' looks forwards to Linton's writing in the 1870s. 'From the Centre Upwards', for instance, anticipates Broadway Ballads in playing received ideas, often voiced in the form of proverbial wisdom, against abstract rights and personal observations.

The development and echoing of themes in the 'Rhymes' generates a sense of inevitability in the arrival at the final poem, 'The Happy Land'. This closure is founded on the set of abstract expectations created within the sequence and fulfilled in this last poem. But 'The Happy Land', which presents the resolution of land ownership in terms of a utopian landscape vision plays with contemporary ideas of landscape and millennial images of the land ownership as the source of definitions of value. These images also grow out of the dialectic of pragmatic suggestions and abstract expectations running through the 'Rhymes'. The poem invites idealisation of its utopian vision by means of an emblematic and self-enclosed form which explains how and why it could be anthologised as a self-contained poem. It is perhaps fitting that the poem has endured into twentieth century through a musical arrangement for communal performance in John Ireland's 1941 choral setting.⁵⁴

Events which stimulated reflections on continuity seemed to elicit fluency of expression in Linton's writing, a tendency shown in the lyrical sections of the 'Rhymes'. He developed this emphasis on inwardness in one of his finest single poems, the 'Threnody in Memory of Albert Darasz (London, 19 Sept., 1852)'.⁵⁵ A veteran of the 1828 Polish insurrection and experienced journalist, Darasz had served in the 1848 Provisional Government until expelled by the Reaction in

⁵⁴ Winthrop Rogers Edition Festival Series of Choral Music (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1941).

⁵⁵ ER, 1852-53. The text used is from the single volume ER in the British Library shelfmark PP. 3610.6 p. 202. Further references will be given as 'Threnody'.

June 1849. Despite ill health he established the Central European Democratic Committee in London before his death in exile.⁵⁶ A description of the poem's rhetoric in terms of paraphrase tends to weaken its effect, indicating its strength as a creative work deriving from inner convictions rather than an attempt to weld the meditational with the determinate aims of public discourse. The combination of public gesture and personal meditation in the form and purpose of the threnody leads to an undivided creative aim which produces confident diction which in turn gives rise to fluency. In the poem, continuity and fluency are thematically and structurally linked in a way that is best appreciated by familiarity with the whole work.

The falling rhythm of the first verse establishes the tone and purpose of the whole poem:

Another death! another Martyr lain
In the Exiles' Tomb!—O Grief! thy fangs are sharp;
And these heart-cleaving agonies threat to warp
The hopefulest spirit from its upward strain.
Alas! the higher hope, the farther fall:
And more than lofty hope must be thy pall. (ll. 1-6)

The rest of the poem explores the concepts and emotions introduced at the outset: disappointment, grief, and hope. The first half of the poem consists of repeated attempts to find a way out of defeat through language. This takes the form of a series of dead ends, suggested in the nature of the imagery:

⁵⁶ W. J. Linton, 'Our Martyrs: Albert Darasz', *ER*, 1852-53, pp. 197-202.

O unaccomplish'd hope! O grief of griefs,
 When the sap faileth ere the worth is ripe!
 Thou proud fruit-bearer, whom Decay doth wipe,
 As a mere painting, from life's page! The chiefs
 Of the world's worthiest look'd to thee for aid;
 And we to worship in thy branching shade.

The axe hath struck thee in thy manhood's prime:
 Thy purpose unmatured: so fairly blown
 Thy blossom, and the fruit set: all foreknown
 The richness of thy virtue, the sublime
 Eternity enkernel'd in its growth.
 Thy life read to us certain as God's troth. (ll. 7-18)

This circular movement around images of truncation is thus enacting the initial experience of grief. This extract also illustrates that the first line of each verse throughout the whole poem contains a word or concept that echoes an idea in the last line of the previous verse, creating a sense of a sustained path of thought and utterance, in this case 'thy branching shade' links to 'The axe hath struck thee'. These linked ideas reinforce the concept of continuity that underlies the articulation of grief and loss in the image of potential growth 'foreknown' but cut off. Determinism yields images of productivity because Linton has a sense of continuity, to which is linked the fluency of the poem.

The beginnings of resolution are indicated by a gradual alternation of tone and an equally gradual shift about mid-way in the poem towards images of inward consolation through faith in patterns of renewal: sun, memory, friendship, images of upward movement in flight, growth, and sky:

Ah, no! God's world is wider than our earth.
 What is this earth? A narrow altar-stone,
 Which thou, brave friend! Did'st lay thy life upon
 For God: a sacrifice of endless worth.
 All worth is endless, thou must live therefore:
 Part of the Eternal Work for evermore. (ll. 49-54)

Similar images yield opposite meanings, for example the idea of the earth occurs in varied contexts and with different connotations: 'strangers' ground' (l. 19), 'Thy tomb is but one martyr-stair the more' (l. 27), which leads on to doubt 'In vain! Recall the past! Recall thy life!' (l. 37), resolved in a sharpened awareness of the earth's physical qualities.

The other poems in the ER play out the interchange of individual and community through the formal stability of the voice of a singular speaker with a stronger emphasis on personal experience. The increasing presence of the monologue in Linton's verse and a further emphasis on formal characteristics places his authorial interests closer to Landor and Browning than to his contemporary republican writers in 1851. The monologue in Linton's use of it gives historical event as personally experienced, thus relating the past closely to the reader. Consequently the narrative poems Linton wrote for the ER feel less rhetorical than the 'Rhymes'. Of the seven Linton wrote at this time, 'King Arthur', 'Alfred', 'Simon de Montfort', 'Ket the Tanner', 'Grenville's Last Fight, great odds at sea, a leaf of English history', 'Henry Vane', 'Harry Marten's Dungeon Thoughts', only two were published in the ER.⁵⁷ In 'A leaf of English history' the account of English Elizabethan naval expertise is given in the imagined voice of a sailor offering personal witness of the events described in Raleigh. Linton hints at the source within the poem in a manner that suggests it dovetails with his view; it is an apology for the unadorned style of the account, which comes just before an encapsulation of the themes of self-sacrifice and honour (ll. 156-63). The style is justified by virtue of the speaker's rank and of the subject; 'The diamond shines however meanly set', that is the subject speaks

⁵⁷ 'A leaf of English history', ER 1852 no. 36 Sept. 2, 'Arthur', ER 1853, pp. 233-236.

clearly, and validates, any form of expression. The theme is therefore made as if self-evident, intrinsic to the events, growing naturally out of them and requiring no rhetoric. The image also suggests that the plain expression is appropriate to the nature of the speaker.

The relationship of the individual and community is implied throughout 'A leaf of English history', but the structure of 'King Arthur' suggests that Linton could think in different terms about the same theme. The poem is written with more attention to figurative language in the diction and imagery, and therefore feels more constructed, contrived, but I think this is part of Linton's purpose in dealing with the material, which is fragmented and distant. Balanced with this is the poem's interpretation of Arthur as a 'patriot' in whom self-fulfilment and duty are interwoven in a dynamic image of personal unity. 'A leaf of English history' is a monologue, but Arthur's lamentation alternates with a chorus sung by the three queens. The role of the chorus is to emblematised the responses to Arthur's despondency. The poem begins, perhaps deliberately, where Tennyson's 'epic' left off, thus inviting comparison. In Linton's poem Arthur, despondent about the uncertainty of his legacy to the future, lies in the barge and, despite being unaware of the 'fairy crew', his speech is bound into a dialogue with their chorus about individual purpose and survival. Arthur speaks in figurative terms about his sense of loss:

"Excalibar, the charmed sword, returns
Unto the hand that gave it,—sunk,—drawn in,—
Nor left such ripple as an autumn leaf
Reaching the water-marge on Evening's breath.
So sinks my life after its turmoil'd years
Without a trace: blown from its branch of power, —
And Time's dull stream flows o'er it heedlessly.
It should not be so. [. . .]

My life was and close-hammer'd as the blade, —
 True steel that never struck an idle blow.
 Unto what end its stalwartness? Defeat.
 Lo, I lie here. The sword hath left no mark." (ll. 15-22,
 27-30)

As a point of comparison with Tennyson's Arthur, he takes up Malory's last words in more hopeful terms about resignation to loss and change.

Linton's Arthur is closer to the expectations of the listener's image in the concluding dream. The final question at the end of 'Arthur', 'What voice replies?' condenses the whole of point of the ER in asking the reader to consider individual action as the basis for a response to the visible evidence of class government. In the periodical context the question also refers to the prose 'Life of Henry Vane' following the poem, a positioning that suggests Vane's life may represent a possible reply to the question. This is to give a localised reading, but 'Arthur' also deals with broader themes and ideas and is more than a journalistic curiosity. One of the questions Linton seems to be asking through the poem is about the viability of the verse is outside of the journalistic context. Myth lends itself to the kind of partisan readings, perspectives and interpretations that Linton imparts to the story of Arthur, but this is one of the dynamics that Linton was interested in. The moment of loss in the poem leads to progress. Linton's use of verse is more than a consolatory process of memorialising history pieced together from the accepted record.

A corollary to the ER poetry is Linton's manuscript volume of narrative poems 'English Heroes', which brought together all of the narrative verse printed in the periodical in 1851-53, or written during that period. The poems were fairly copied in 1853 in a manner typical of Linton's preparation of manuscripts for a printer, and the readers among whom he circulated the manuscript suggest

that he was sounding out reactions with a view to publication. The responses however were mixed: John Forster found a 'rugged energy' in them, but Ellen Adams, despite being emotionally 'stirred' by the poems, expressed reservations about the uniformity of blank verse.⁵⁸

These poems mark the formal departure from the style of the politically charged lyric that Linton had done so much to develop in the 1840s. A different aspect of the ER is emphasised in the fact of Linton's gathering of these poems together in the form of a distinct collection, which looks forward to many similar thematic manuscript volumes Linton made by mining verse that was initially printed as part of a periodical programme.⁵⁹ As an authorial act the collection distances the poems from the journalistic context in several ways: the similarity of the poems in length and formal uniformity as blank verse narrative stresses the unity and sequence of the subject matter, and justifies their grouping in volume form. A further unifying feature is the framing device that Linton wrote for 'English Heroes'. These sonnets create a more suggestive and dynamic reading than that permitted by the separate printing of the poems in the periodical. In effect, the implication is that while the poems as they were printed in the ER related to and were in some ways informed by the journalistic subjects, Linton also intended them to be read within a broader framework, and consequently to find a broader audience. An indication of this is the publication of 'Grenville's Last Fight, great odds at sea, a leaf of English history' in All the Year Round (1859), and its subsequent, and moderately famous, version, or imitation

⁵⁸ John Forster, to W. J. L., 21 January 1854, Feltrinelli 2/44. Ellen Adams, to W. J. L., 4 March 1854, Feltrinelli 2/4.

⁵⁹ Ms dated 1853, Beinecke. The collection was initially entitled 'English Champions', a term which emphasised the representative nature of the protagonists therein.

according to Linton, by Gerald Massey.⁶⁰ ‘Alfred’, ‘Grenville’ and ‘Marten’ were grouped as ‘Three Englishmen’ in Linton’s Claribel and Other Poems (1865), with the inclusion of ‘Arthur’ as a separate poem. The survival and success of the poems outside the periodical is assisted by the form of blank verse narrative form, handled by Linton with technical ability in generating a sense of momentum within each poem. The collection also gives a clearer sense of the kind of relationship Linton conceived of with a readership at this time than the discursive context of the periodical.

The central characters in each poem shift sequentially from mythical and folkloric sources, King Arthur, King Alfred, through to dramatic monologues which focus on the personal reflections of historical events: a sailor’s account of Richard Grenville, and Harry Marten’s meditations on imprisonment. The range of protagonists seems to be a deliberate reflection of republican notions of continuity, noted by historian Antony Taylor as a feature of republican discourse in the 1850s: ‘Celebrations of the Commonwealth, in the same way as other radical themes such as the ‘Norman Yoke’ and the experience of 1688, provided a collective memory of the past that established a historical context for events in the present [. . .], while at the same time satisfying the desire for continuity that inspired conceptions of a mythic constitution under Alfred or Canute’.⁶¹ Recent historical studies of Victorian radicalism such as Taylor’s have emphasised the presence and significance of the past as a means for republicans to stress continuity and therefore legitimacy of republicanism. creating a consensus in validating and justifying political claims, and the unification of the collection

⁶⁰ W. J. L., to H. Buxton Forman 12 April 1881. W. J. L., to Richard H. Stoddard, 17 March 1878.

⁶¹ Antony Taylor ‘Down with the Crown’: British Anti-monarchism and Debates about Royalty since 1790 (Reaktion Books London 1999), p. 57.

supports, and is supported by, the idea of a republican tradition. However, in the framing verse that opens the collection the poetic voice signals that the link between past and present depends as much on the reader's interpretation as upon the fixed reputations of a pantheon of national heroes, introducing contradictory elements that are eventually worked out within the frame's figurative terms, but as guiding assumptions about history, narrative purpose and the reader, these contradictions remain unresolved:

Thou shrinkest from Defeat; an idiot's word-
 Impracticable-scares thee from attempt.
 Which of the brave-I ask thee-were exempt
 From that reproach? – Take down thy rusty sword!
 And while thy valour gets an edge again,
 While thou assayest thine armour, link by link,
 My song shall lead thy hope to honour's brink,
 Telling thee how old meteor-swords did wane,
 Were lost in night, and yet, for all the wrath
 Of darkness, filling their appointed path,
 Did make defeat triumphant, loss a gain.
 Seeing their passing glory, thou may'st think
 What ruin is-what virtue-what success;
 And so step firmly, following worthiness.

Analogy is made to bear the burden of the meaning. Swords are meteors which represent the figures of folklore that briefly trace an 'appointed path' against the sky. The language of natural inevitability fits in with the radical tradition, but 'appointed path' is both an apt description of a meteor and suggestive of design and direction. The poem suggests that the reader's reflections on how the terms of defeat in 'What ruin is-what virtue-what success', relate to the narratives which follow, and how these terms relate to the subsequent narratives, is to 'step firmly, following worthiness'. While the frame articulates an intention to retrace the stories from a defined perspective, the

process of reception is acknowledged as a subjective, even uncertain element in meaning.

As exemplary figures the outlines of the heroic careers are necessarily fixed, and the verse recognises this in the idea of each figure 'filling their appointed path', but suggests a type of fatalism potentially inimical to the theme of individual liberty of interpretation. However, this contradiction is resolved in the emblematic idiom of the framing poems; the distancing of the poetic voice from the reader's conclusions, suggesting instead that the direction of the historical record into potential action is to 'step firmly, following worthiness'. Crucial to the sense of the verse is the conditional 'thou may'st think' which plays against the apparent certainty of the opening lines. But these lines, in emphasising 'My song', point to the subjective nature of the narrative poems. The framing device suggests the authority of the poetic speaker in providing a unifying emblematic image, in figure of the night sky, to condense the purpose of the sequence, but concurrently the frame works to distance the speaker from the narratives. In a sense then the poetic speaker stands to one side of the ways in which his work is received. The emblem of the 'meteor-swords' suggests not only the kinds of paths the protagonists are imagined to describe but also the dependence of the poems on sequential, linear reading.

A comparison between the introductory and concluding sonnets of the manuscript, an exercise implicit in the structure of the sequence, illustrates how the style is becoming more concerned with writing about the movement of time than contemporary problems per se:

I call'd them meteor lights that came and went.
 Truly they are fix'd stars, to lead our course
 Into the haven of Heroic Force.
 Behold them shining in the firmament!
 Let not their radiance be obscured or shent
 By coward sloth or shame!-O quick Remorse!
 Waken this England to renew her fame.
 O Fame and England! how can ye divorce? -
 I sang of the Defeated: for that name
 Was on our champions' tombs. Yet he who wins
 Is not defeated-Lo, this earth ball spins
 Along its pathway; upward soars the flame;
 Truth never loseth; God is aye the same-
 The minstrel's task here ends: the Man's begins.

The conclusion turns the reader from 'appointed paths' of meteors to 'fix'd stars', which suggests that the course is dependent on the reader's capacity to navigate. Here we find Linton's idea of the poet creating a relationship with his reader through figurative language. 'God is aye the same', that is, a fixed point. In the last line the division of writing/song and the world is made explicit, movement into the present. As twin framing verses they create an internal dialogue which modifies the initial representation of the heroes as meteors with an image of stability growing out of the narratives. It could be argued that the form alienates Linton from the subject of contemporary ideological defeat. Linton's creative choices represent a self-conscious adoption of morally loaded anachronistic, analogical language. In many ways this was self-limiting as well. An indication of Linton's constant preoccupation with modern models is an echo of In Memoriam (LIV) in the epilogue to 'Ket the Tanner':

No word of Truth is syllabled in Vain:
 Nor ever really faileth forthright deed:
 No true persistence is a barren seed:
 No loss can hinder God's eternal gain.

Linton brings in the echo of In Memoriam as a point of comparison, where Tennyson used the imagery of the natural cycle to rationalise the hope that loss constantly becomes gain. Linton uses Tennyson's form to articulate a rationalisation of retreat by circling around the defining terms of ideological defeat in a 'version' that is less conditional than the model, with the abrupt lineation and insistent 'No [. . .]' as opposed to a cautious 'we trust [. . .] That not [. . .]'. Linton had accepted a less sceptical outlook on the value of language, producing a bolder, less complex outline in his poetry than contemporaries like Tennyson. Indeed much of 'English Heroes' seems to be a kind of reflection on the immediate meaning of In Memoriam, which has been 'converted' into something directly related to the crisis of the survival of the protester's voice and the personal implications of ideological defeat. It would therefore be an oversimplification to characterise the echo as an instance of creative failure.

The element of continuity is an aspect of the narrative poems that portray the contemporary theme of the Crimean War in the terms of historical conflicts. As reinforcements of a journalistic programme they describe individual self-determination in the context of moments of national self-definition, and therefore form part of Linton's reading of English military involvement in the Crimean as a necessary intervention in favour of national identity against Russian imperialistic intentions in the Balkans; 'The Battle of Newbury' was printed in the July-August 1854 number of the periodical, at the height of siege of Sebastopol. As a distinct group, in Linton's other intended reading, the poems interpret each figure as a different facet of cultural determination and definition. Another layer is that the poems represent Linton's means of reflecting on his

own isolation. Yet the sense of renewal made possible by the reactivation of the past through the representation of historical events as potential lessons for the present brings in explicitly and implicitly the reader's role in the interpretation of the events. The reader's act of interpretation is an explicit theme of the opening verse, in the sense that the process of 'seeing their passing glory' involves reflection on 'what ruin is', and is therefore a way of considering closely the meaning of these terms. The narratives offer the reader a way of interpreting the events of national history as a personal and reflective relationship, and one which is therefore constantly renewed in the act of reading. To emphasise the personal and subjective elements in the construction of narrative history Linton gives the personal voice in Grenville and Marten using the blank verse to relate and link definitions of failure to ideas of renewal.

Further comparisons with the implied poetic in the ER poetry is the allegorical structure of The Plaint of Freedom (1852), and the public voice of 'Carmen Triumphale' (1856). The Plaint, in reconciling the political lyric with the demands of sustained verse writing, forms one of Linton's attempts to clarify and enact the place of the individual voice in a concept of liberty as a collective achievement. The poem was privately published in an edition of three hundred and distributed anonymously. Later, Linton could not account for his choice of anonymity for the Plaint, 'unless it was that I doubted my own ability for writing so serious a work' which he, furthermore, counted as his 'principal' work.⁶² Walter Savage Landor wrote a panegyric to the 'Praiser of Milton' before he knew Linton was the author, and intended to insert the poem in his The Last Fruit of an Old Tree (1852), but Forster, despite Landor's instructions, apparently

⁶² Memories, p. 125. W. J. L., to H Buxton Forman, 4 November 1875, Beinecke.

removed it from the printer's copy.⁶³ The fact that the Plaint found its way into the hands of Landor and elicited public praise from a prominent writer is a sufficient indication of the kind of literary liberal readership Linton set out to find.

The Plaint is very different in many ways from the writing printed in the ER, but the element of response to In Memoriam is even more evident in the poem's verse form and the way in which it deals with similar themes. The Plaint begins with an invocation made from darkness, where Milton's voice takes the place of the spirit, for the song to 'flow/Volcano-voiced, for all to hear'. The song begins with a personification of 'Freedom's Sentinel' in a contemporary setting: 'And Change leaps like a springtide o'er / The landmarks of the ancient sway: / The fierce winds hunger for their prey; / And monarchs tremble at their roar' (verse 7), but:

Their echoes break upon our coast-
The isle that Freedom loved so well;
But stir not Freedom's Sentinel,
Asleep on his neglected post.

The watchman sleepeth, and the fire
Of Freedom dwindles at his side,-
The beacon, in old days espied
By farthest lands, will soon expire. (verses 8-9)

The sentinel is provoked to question England's 'younger warriors' in a 'profoundest trance', and sets out on an account of freedom in the condition of England:

Like him who dead, in fear flung down,
By touching but the prophet's corse,
Revived,-so gain thou living force
From out the tomb of old renown! (verse 40)

⁶³ Landor, to W. J. L., 8 November 1852, Beinecke. Memories, pp. 125-26.

Then the pantheon of English figures and events of traditional liberties,
the latest of which is Paine, after whom 'Freedom's voice fail'd. All was still'.

Milton then speaks;

A crystal,-break it as you will,
Howe'er minutely it divides,
Each fragment hath its perfect sides,
Each is a perfect crystal still.

Be thus complete! Yet ware the fault
Of shaping, fitting overmuch,
Till, as the most are fashion'd, such
The few must be, and progress halt. (verses 177-178)

This section echoes In Memoriam in drawing its central image from scientific observation. Linton's idea of the crystal encapsulates his theory of progress as a matter of inner unity.

In a note to the poem Linton clarifies the relationship between poetry and politics that is implicit to his writing in the ER: 'There is no intention in any of these lines, of quitting the true poetic sphere, to insist upon any political dogma. The poet has to do with principles. Why so much stress is laid upon the almost forgotten duty of patriotism is because when once we have learned to step from self-love, and that love of family and friends which is but an enlarged self-love, to an unselfish patriotism, then the true end and aim of life and government will be made plain'. This is a continuation of his earlier conviction in the mid 1830s of poetry as the expression of liberty rather than of a specific political perspective.

Despite the restriction of the discussion to the 'Rhymes', the only detailed discussion of the poetry from the ER is by Janowitz in her study of Romantic influences on Victorian working class writing. In relation to the utopian element of the 'Rhymes' Janowitz presents them as the product of his isolated life during

the course of his work on the ER in 1851, proposing that 'perhaps Linton believed his own version of rurality [. . .] he moved in 1852 to Brantwood'.⁶⁴ Not only does the extant correspondence show that Linton had continual contact with London, but he wrote the 'Rhymes' in 1848-49, at least two years before moving to Brantwood. Janowitz suggests that Linton substituted his poetic world for the real one. The self-conscious searching of Linton's verse shows that he did not confuse his metaphors with experience, nor did he expect an attentive reader to do so. The poems are self-conscious in style, a feature not consistent with a personal belief in an unproblematic lyrical resolution of an economic problem upon which Linton had a firm pragmatic grasp.

Janowitz's argument is concerned with Linton's place in the 'increased and apparently ineluctable separation of the political from the aesthetic' in Victorian poetry, and concurrent a shift away from customary concepts of the self during the development of working class consciousness in Victorian thought and expression. Janowitz finds this pattern emerging in Linton's practice as a writer. In the framework of thematic mutation that informs the terms of her argument, the 'Rhymes' are read as a 'generic experiment [. . .] part of the politico-poetic context out of which emerged Morris's *Pilgrims of Hope*'. Janowitz places the 'Rhymes' in the dual context of individual lyricism and collective narrative as 'a genre which solves the problem of both meeting the affective needs of the individual through lyricism, and the narrative aims of the collective struggle'.⁶⁵ The 'Rhymes' thus solve the conflicting demands of individual and public reader expectations by combining elegiac and customary elements. However, in her argument the sequential structure is successful in its

⁶⁴ Janowitz, p. 213.

⁶⁵ Janowitz, p. 208, 211.

original context, but for Janowitz this feature ultimately consigns the constituent verse to historical curiosity. Using the publication history of 'The Happy Land' Janowitz concludes that the dependence on sequence entails a loss of rhetorical and thematic force in isolation from that context.⁶⁶ The dependence of the poems on the original sequence raises the issue of how modern readers encounter Victorian poetry in anthologies and standard texts.

In looking closely at the different responses that the poems in the 'Rhymes' make possible, my discussion has shown that the poems work within and outside their original context, demonstrating that the poetry, particularly the lyrical sections, not only satisfied the 'affective needs of the individual through lyricism, and the narrative aims of the collective struggle' in a Victorian context. 'The Happy Land', poem that Janowitz has chosen to illustrate the diminishment of the poems when removed from their original context. Of all the poems in the 'Rhymes', the self-contained characteristics of 'The Happy Land' invites removal from the sequence. In the ER narrative poems, and the formal features of 'Our Heritage', 'The Consecrated Land' and 'The Happy Land' bridge the personal space of the lyric and the needs of public address. The purpose of these poems, motivated by concerns other than the singular mode of personal expression, confers upon them the charge of community noted by Janowitz. The combination of personal lyric meditation with the didactic function is self-conscious, yet the success of the personal elements wins them back from potential characterisation as sermons by directing the individual reader's attention inward to a reflective response, and to the ramifications of acting upon

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 216.

it. It was natural therefore that Linton authorised separate printings of the individual poems.

The ER poetry asks questions about resilience and survival, and of finding the right mode of expression. In engaging with political writing Linton was deferring the demands of literary originality, but he was aware of his limitations as a writer in all the forms that he practised. The theme of deferral within the poetry, or at least the language of future fulfilment, was, conveniently, a device of republican rhetoric within which the future was conceived of as the inevitable movement towards a culture of self determination. Linton incorporated this into poetic imagery as a symbolic discourse. Furthermore, deferral is made a poetic theme in 'English Heroes' in the interchange between transience and the reliability of cultural reference points. For instance, Arthur is a mythical figure but truth inheres in the reader's understanding of the folkloric narrative. Deferral was thus a personal as well as political theme, and we find yet again the presence of personal elements in poems that have been received and seem to encourage reading as purely public statements.

Chapter Five: 1856-1874

This chapter explores the variety of Linton's writing in the period from 1856 up to 1875, the period in which he became an established resident in America. From 1855 Linton experienced a period of traumatic personal change: the ER had failed in its purpose of building up a group of readers and of creating a republican party in England, Emily was suffering from the consumption that may have afflicted her sister, and his marriage in 1859 to Eliza Lynn was unsuccessful for both of them. Linton's personal experience is present in his poetry during the 1850s as a stoic resilience to repetitive patterns of defeat, but there are other elements which converge and polarise. Chapter Four has discussed how the synthetic balladry of the 'Rhymes and Reasons Against Landlordism' plays against the authorial model of the poet as a stable observer and recorder of universal liberty in The Plaint of Freedom. Linton continued the direction of the ER verse in 'Carmen Triumphale', a poem in which Linton's concern with the relationship of present and past was worked out in a way similar in method to some of the ER poems, particularly 'Cromwell's Statue'. 'Carmen Triumphale' sought to address a wide contemporary audience on a particular contemporary event, but located its subject within a broader context than that suggested by its journalistic relationship with the present. The discussion in this chapter moves on to 'Love's Diary', a private meditation on love, which was written concurrently with the ER poems, but represents a different type of authorial activity. The verse in 'Love's Diary' shows an inwardness that might appear incongruous to readers familiar with Linton's published writing and public roles in the 1850s, but this draft manuscript notebook figures in my

argument as an illustration of the personal functions of verse writing for Linton, and of the direction in which his poetry was developing.¹ This leads into Linton's activities during his difficult years with Eliza Lynn, and his association with Household Words and All the Year Round. Linton's work for these mainstream periodicals was matched by his attempt to offer the public a balanced and varied collection of his verse, Claribel, and Other Poems published in 1865. One year later Linton emigrated to New York, at which point my account traces the continuities in his ideas of authorship.

In 1856 hostilities in the Crimean War ended, and in March a peace treaty was signed by Russia, France and England in Paris. For Linton and his fellow European republicans, the outcome of the peace merely maintained the pre-war apportionment of political power among aristocratic European governments, particularly in Russia. Popular celebration of the peace treaty in England was qualified by a widespread awareness that the war had been conducted with the high degree of incompetence at command level, exposed in enquiries and reported in the press. Even a short popular history of the war printed in the Illustrated London News immediately after the peace declaration highlighted the mistakes of Balaclava and Inkerman, forgivingly represented in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', a poem echoed in Linton's public response to the peace, 'Carmen Triumphale'. Bereft of an appropriate platform, Linton intended the poem to be distributed at public celebrations of the peace in London, and he had asked Adams to submit the poem to Punch, the Examiner, the Morning Advertiser, the Illustrated Times, but anonymously to Reynolds's Paper, because

¹ 'Love's Diary', notebook, Hay.

Reynolds apparently would 'not admit them if he thinks them mine'.² This intention was hindered however by the fact that Joseph Cowen, who was to have printed some thousands, failed to do so for some reason. Linton and his eldest son Willie contrived to print 'Carmen' themselves, an act of personal resilience in adversity that may have informed his later affection for the poem.³

The poem is ostensibly an account of the significance of a particular date, May 29th 1856. Divided into four sections, the long sentences are set in a complex alternation of metres tied together by the rhymes and a strong sense of how the satirical correspondences with the past relate to the specific historical moment portrayed. In 'Carmen' we find Linton voicing his convictions directly rather than employing diversions of form. The poem begins with a call to the celebration of the birth of an heir to Louis Napoleon as an augury and confirmation of the recently signed peace treaty. This leads into the speaker's reminder of the 'admirable coincidence' that May 29th had been settled on as the official date of the Queen's birthday, hence the poem's reference to the Restoration. Various acts of homage to the infant develop the comparison of the birth to a second coming. Visiting foreign notaries are represented in a nativity scene where the Papal Legate is given direct speech. The poem ends almost where it began, with a popular acceptance of the peace in what Linton perceived as mass passivity and acquiescence despite the openly expressed reservations in the popular press about the short and long-term 'price' of the treaty.

The head note of 'Carmen' is central for a modern reader's understanding of the specific moment and broader idea of history within which the poem located itself:

² W. J. L., to W. E. Adams, 'Sunday' 1856, Houghton.

³ Linton included 'Carmen' in his 1897 Works, Beinecke.

For the general rejoicing ordered on May 29, 1856.

‘Peace signed at the cradle of a Prince.’

‘A JESUS !’

Moniteur, March 16.

In Paris the Moniteur had reported the sermon given at the infant’s ondoisement from which the head note was derived. The specificity of the date was related to Linton’s intention that the poem was to be distributed during the public celebration of the peace treaty. In actual fact there was no order for a ‘general rejoicing’. Linton’s phrase ‘general rejoicing’ alluded to the perception in the popular press that official indifference towards ‘unofficial’ public celebrations of the treaty amounted to an abnegation of responsibility for unruly behaviour. By April the Illustrated London News was dubious of planned illuminations on public buildings to celebrate the peace on the same day as Victoria’s official birthday, adding that government-endorsed large scale celebrations might offend the Russian royalty. The official position on the celebrations was lashed in the press as a permissive attitude toward the potential for urban unrest. Furthermore, the English press was critical of the treaty’s political ramifications, and even a mainstream popular newspaper like the Illustrated London News encouraged a cautious approach to the details of the peace agreement, while remaining ambiguous in its critique of the conditions under which the conflict had been resolved. For instance, congratulation for the common soldiery in an allegorical engraving of warriors exchanging swords and rifles for scythes was balanced with accounts of the inquests into the conspicuous ‘blunders’ during the war. After Linton’s reading in the English Republic of British intervention in the Crimea as a decisive move against Russian

imperialism, and consequent withdrawal as cowardice, the situation surrounding the celebration of the proclamation of the peace treaty was ripe for his attention.

In the context of the popular press, the voice of protest in the poem was not alone in its criticism of the celebrations, but the head note and the poem's opening section imply that the royal birth in Paris was being celebrated unwittingly by the English public at the same time as the peace. Linton's poem adds the birth in terms that tapped into Anglo-French feeling about the peace. As the head note of the poem clarified, the press in Britain and France expressed popular optimism in describing the recent birth of an heir to Louis Napoleon as an 'augury'.⁴ The language of the poem responded in particular to this idea of royal birth as omen current in the months of excitement at the end of the war:

Ring you the bells in country and in town;
And for one day your weary toil remit!
This day is holy: write it fairly down,
That you for ever may remember it.
Never since eighteen centuries and a half
Had man such good cause to laugh.
For 'unto us' again a 'Child is born':
Not Christ-like 'laid in a manger' and forlorn,
But dropt 'in the purple'. (ll. 1-9)

The poem begins as a public celebration, but layers are added in rapid succession with the effect that the initially simple celebration becomes a set of correspondences between past and present. The initial cheery tone is soon undermined by rationalism, indicating Linton's troubled relationship with both officialdom and the potential popular audience. The contemporary language of the birth as an augury is taken to its irreverent conclusion in the apparently appropriate image of the child as a type of second coming. Linton's comparisons

⁴ *ILN* 1856 (I), p. 290.

are therefore derived from the contemporary journalistic terms of public celebration, but in making the alignment of the French royal birth with Christ, the comparison is immediately undermined with the qualification 'Not Christ-like . . . / But dropt "in the purple" '. The poem suggests that the reader ought to be critical of contemporary journalistic terms. The language of the opening might seem to overstate the irony of the nature of the coincident events, but in making the parallel between Christ and the royal birth, the poem casts contemporary events into a longer historical perspective.

Wherefore shout, and quaff
 Large bellyfulls of mirth and mighty beer;
 And fit dull brains to hear
 A hymn in praise of this Redeemer new,-
 And, certes, Prince of Peace we style him too,-
 Who so auspiciously doth now appear!
 Over Sebastopol we saw his star:
 And lo! he calms the war:
 Assuring to this Europe miserable
 A peace past finding out, as christian as its stable. (ll. 9-18)

These additions act as layers in the poem: the Restoration, the recording of history and of a contemporary event, and awareness of great events in the present. The poem is conscious of its borrowings from contemporary discourse, but it subjects these terms to a wilfully literal interpretation in the form of the speaker's initially convincing description of the birth as second coming. Apparently hyperbolic, the description obeys a certain kind of logic, that of the public feeling that Linton made explicit in his interpretation of the celebrations as political factors in convergence. Linton was aware of tapping into what was familiar to his audience:

What most admirable coincidence
 Hath fetch'd us here on the twenty-ninth of May [. . .]
 This pledge of present peace, and gage beyond
 Of France and England tied in closest bond
 Of future hope that well may make us gay. (ll. 26-27, 30-33)

Linton's awareness that he is manipulating rather than echoing popular sentiment is also apparent in his image of the manger which taps into but plays against the popular representation of the cradle familiar to most English readers through the illustrated press (Fig. 22). Linton's use of the common understanding of the manger also comes into the nativity scene. After a description of 'peaceful offerings' from 'Wise Men of the East and West', pessimism and optimism are combined in the way that Linton pictures the 'exultant crowds'. His feelings about the validity of the mass response are apparent in the uneasy relationships within the poem's figures of passivity and activity:

And highest, lowest hearts deep joy doth stir,
 As the wind a grassy glade.
 Rise from amid the basely bending throng,
 O English Poet! (ll. 64-67)

External agency in the image of the celebrating nation as a field of grass subject to the motions of the wind is contrasted with the voluntary, and singular, act of the poet. There is a sense of Linton's ambivalence about the public in his image of them as prone to the forces of rapid change, and this is a further indication of his troubled relationship with the very audience to which the poem was addressed. While his critique is inclusive, the poem reverses Carlyle's comparison of democratic demands as inarticulate and bestial in its picture of



THE IMPERIAL PRINCE IN HIS CRADLE.—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT THE VILLAGE OF N. KISHINEV.

Figure 22. 'The Imperial Prince in his Cradle'. wood engraving, *Illustrated London News*, 19 April 1856, p. 408.

monarchy as 'savagest beasts become blessed company' (l. 54). The speaker feels far more secure, however, about the individual figure of the poet:

O English Poet! Bid thy braver song
 Bear seemlier present to this Princely God;
 Set up beside his cradle-head the rod
 Which doth to him belong;
 Give him the greeting courtiers will not dare;
 And tell him Villainous Power hath Vengeance for his
 heir! (ll. 67-72)

The poet's individual voice seems to represent a possible way out of the historical and contemporary compromises forged by democracy with inherited power. Within the poem the authentic voice of dissent is seen as deriving, but distinct from, the people. Linton, like this figure of the poet, speaks as an individual in a way that consciously departs from popular celebration. Rather than write in a style that would have exposed the isolation attendant on the personal perspective, Linton draws from contemporary and historical discourse to portray himself as an observer. Consequently the reader is diverted from the personal element of the poem's viewpoint to the idea of poetic speaker as observer.

The idea in the poem of an 'admirable coincidence' of the Restoration, the peace, and the birth of an heir to Louis Napoleon, plays on the meaning of coincidence as both chance and in its literal sense as a convergence of events. The speaker's interpretation of this convergence is reflected in the concluding couplets of the final section's coda:

Ring out the bells in country and in town!
 Whatever hap, one day we intermit
 War-weighted labour. Best not think of it;
 But brag of 'peace' whose end is all unknown;
 Rejoicing as our masters say is fit,
 Though peace be worse than war.-
 Glory to God for Rascal the Restored!
 Hath meet response in-God! *we thankful are*
That English traitors broke our England's sword
Lest Right should gain: afraid to disobey
The vilest knave in France. (ll. 109-119)

The past is answered by the present: the Restoration and, by extension, the return of monarchical power, 'hath meet response' in the treaty, opening up an idea of correspondence between monarchy past and present, suggesting that this perspective is an apposite way of understanding present facts, and that power relations from past to present remained stable, just as they may in the future. The effect of the correspondence idea is to foreground the larger patterns, exposing the idea of the treaty as a 'prop' of divine right embodied in the poem's presentation of the birth.

Given the context, and the use of popular iconography in the poem it is possible to see why Cowen might have had reservations in printing the poem for the kind of large scale distribution envisaged by Linton. 'Carmen' utilised, but cut across, the language of public feeling in a way that might have been misunderstood by those it was intended to provoke into deeper thought, particularly lines such as 'quaff / Large bellyfulls of mirth and mighty beer; / And fit dull brains to hear / A hymn in praise of this Redeemer new'. With such palpable designs on the reader the poem might have become a versified form of journalism, but Linton had expressed his ideas into a more engaging form than the implied intentions of the poem suggest.

Despite the poem's appeals to history, it is an individual's perspective on the present. A comparison in terms of purpose might be Tennyson's 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington', a poem that set out to be part of an event that it described. Linton planned to have his poem distributed in the same way.

'Carmen' also has the same sense of a contemporary speaker surrounded by a multitude and conscious of witnessing a great event which brings up ideas of continuity. There is even a similarity in the long verse paragraphs and irregular rhyme scheme, but closer reading shows that Tennyson's poem was probably a reminiscence rather than a direct influence or intended comparison.

The identity of authorial voice is more complicated in the manuscript notebook 'Love's Diary', which was written concurrently with the public gestures of the ER and 'Carmen Triumphale', but the verse looks forward to later writing, such as Broadway Ballads (1875), where the boundaries between Linton as poet and as speaker are blurred. Dating from 1854, the notebook contains lyrics similar to many of those Janowitz gives from Claribel (1865) as examples of the 'isolated subjectivity' she portrays Linton as inhabiting by the late 1870s. Linton included some of the 'Love's Diary' lyrics in Claribel, but they belong to the mid 1850s and therefore may not be automatically polarised with the ER verse that Linton was writing at the same time. The 'Diary' is important in showing how the personal elements of lyric and the elements of communal verse structures co-existed during the 1850s, and that the retreat from communal to personal lyric central to Janowitz's account of Linton's career simplifies the equal standing of both elements throughout his writing.

'Love's Diary' begins as a unified sequence: lyrics 1-134 are dated 1854 to 1856, with 147 'Remanet' (Jan [?] 1859) appearing to be the planned

conclusion of the sequence. The 'Diary' like many of Linton's notebooks, became used for later drafts of poetry, in this case as late as 1889. The first part of 'Love's Diary' seems to be a sketch for a publication alternating unsystematically with later verse in a manner similar to a later surviving notebook.⁵ The manuscript shows how Linton considered sequence as an underpinning element of his writing at an early draft stage. In the context of the way his verse developed, the 'Diary' also seems to experiment with the later themes and forms, such as the poet's search for apposite terms for love as a moral as well as emotional experience, marking out territory revisited in Heart Easings and Love-Lore. When set against biographical material, the manuscript resembles Linton's private record of emotional events in his experience with Eliza Lynn. The 'Diary' might have represented something special to Linton by virtue of the intimacy of its subject matter, but this autobiographical reading assumes that the verse is a direct rendition of experience, and that Linton was unaware of the connotations of his working title. There are other indications that he intended the sequence for publication: the manuscript shows annotations and marks for a printer, while the introductory verse encapsulates the idea of personality transmuted into example:

Wretched men
Are cradled into poesy by wrong:
They learn in suffering what they teach in song.

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
Beacon the rocks whereon high hearts are wreckt.

⁵ 'Poems 1865-66', Beinecke.

The idea of the poet's experiences as 'beacons' suggests a didactic reading. The first lyric establishes the trajectory of the whole sequence, and also suggests a complex outcome for the traditional themes and elements of love poetry.

I neither work nor speak nor think,
 But sit in silence on the brink
 Of that great hope where leavest thou me:
 Ever the bright stream gliding by
 Reflects a glorious summer sky,
 The while I watch and wait for thee.

Come quickly, Friend! That hope must hear
 My life upon its current fair
 Until it reach the distant sea.-
 Thou art beside me, and my bark
 Floats proudly. Whither? All is dark.
 I smile: my heart is sure of thee.

This sets up the sequence's recurrent figure of linear movement for the development of the speaker's feelings, forming part of a larger theme, that of finding apposite terms for the moral and emotional experiences of love. At this early point the speaker is confident in the conventional mode of the journey, beginning in light and ending in a darkness relieved by trust. The recurrent image of the sequence, a progressive linear course marked out in an emblematic landscape, is sustained only by the speaker's quest for clarity of expression. Subsequent lyrics attempt different moods, so that there is no distinct single tone. However, there is a continuous line in the concept of love as a courtly pact which in turn is an emblem of mutuality, an ideal of worthiness. This idea of love as mutuality is suggested in questions and implied dialogue, although the speaker remains in control. Throughout this sequence the speaker portrays the working out of his intimate feelings as worthy of public exhibition as 'guides' for readers

(Poem 18). At one point the idea of exemplary experience is figured in recognisable individuals familiar as representative of self sacrifice, such as Iphigenia (Poems 50-54).⁶ These characters speak as if from a single voice, creating unity of utterance and idea to reflect the central idea of self-sacrifice as a form of aspiration, highlighting however Linton's incapacity for negative capability.

Poem 81 is particularly delicate in its search for definition with its metrical thinning out at the beginning and end of each verse:

What then is love?-
 Two streams-we need not ask for either's source-
 Are flowing tow'rd one sea:
 They meet, and intermingling in their course
 Are thence one stream, and can not sunder'd be.
 And this is love. (ll. 1-6)

Poem 133 deals with the same kind of idea, attempting to build up an image of the experience of love from the store of traditional symbols:

Words, loving words, since kisses can not be!
 Words, passionate words that echo past delight!
 O love! whose sun is absent, give to me
 Some starry memories to cheat my night.

Words, loving words! repeat that thou art mine.
 Words, burning words! to warm my heart so cold,
 Iced in this polar distance, where I pine
 For summer and its splendours manifold. (ll. 1-8)

⁶ Included in Claribel as 'Five sermons from one text'.

Lyrics like these represent the beginning of Linton's imitative relationship with sixteenth-century love poetry and a process of practice in draft form that fed into his ability to write in compact and concise forms.

The sequence becomes retrospective, containing Linton's favourite pattern of experience: youthful idealism growing into disillusion and resignation oscillating between the 'old man' and the youth, the two often contrasted within the same lyric.

'Remanet' (Poem 147) appears to be almost directly autobiographical, dated January 1859, but probably written of a couple of years earlier when he had lost Emily and several of his children, and was relying on his engraving for most of his income:

Wife, Children, Friends!-and only Art remains.
 Love, Hope, and Trust, are hidden in the tomb.
 Wife, Child and Friend,-pursuit that has no pains,
 O Art! maintain thy lamp in my lone home.

Joy, Future Gain, and Sympathy, have fled
 And left me desolate for all my years.
 Art! yet on the shrivel'd parchment may be spread
 Thy rainbow colours moisten'd with my tears.

Verse like this anticipates the compactness of Linton's later love lyrics, but with a spontaneity that they conceal in their formality of expression. The final image of the painting blurring with his tears resonates with a clarity that derived from his proximity to mortality and personal loss. In the context of the sequence the image is given poignancy by the speaker's reflection that creativity failed to compensate for these experiences.

From a biographical perspective the whole notebook is a valuable document, and the lyrics written between 1862-64 mostly concern

disappointment and parting, suggesting a direct relationship between Linton's personal experiences in his difficult relationship with Eliza and the purpose of his writing. But even in this Linton found that form not only served the personal purpose of consolation, but produced a compact exploration of the process of finding consolation:

There are days of our lives that lie on the past
 Like prints of bleeding feet:
 But the heart's wayfaring records last,
 Though Hope and Joy may meet.
 Never effaced by the summer rain,
 Those marks must aye remain.

Look not back, thou Unhappy One!
 For the blood will blind thine eyes;
 Look not down on thy feet; begone
 From the track of agonies.
 Leave to the past the things of the past:
 For, alas! those marks must last. (Poem 163, dated 1864)⁷

While the themes of loss, disappointment, and separation in the lyrics may be treated as autobiographical subjects, they indicate that verse was Linton's way of working out his emotional experience, using lyric forms to distance himself from personal events. Even so, the idea of a sequence implicit in the diary idea becomes material for exemplary experience in which love is understood in terms of self-sacrifice and mutuality. In some ways then the 'Diary' lends itself to a biographical reading. While some of the poems encourage this kind of correlation there are an equal number that conform to the 'anonymity' Janowitz notes. The personal nature of the poems suggest that Linton's beliefs and convictions are congruent with those of his lyric speaker, thus encouraging a correlation of speaker and author in a biographical sense. This raises the question of how far Linton's poetry can be read as biography,

⁷ Printed in Claribel as 'Footprints'.

particularly when it is sequential and dated. 'Love's Diary' shows Linton in the initial phase of exorcising the biographical, directly personal elements and deflecting them into the universal and didactic. On the whole the lyrics suggest personal events, since it seems that Linton wrote to rationalise his responses to emotional events. Like 'English Heroes', 'Love's Diary' represents the problem of differentiating between convention and experience in Linton's verse.

Linton's submissions for Household Words and All the Year Round from 1856 to 1864 are indications of his versatility in successfully adapting the themes of his verse to the middle class periodical within the same period that he had been writing the English Republic verse.⁸ Linton may have thought the anonymous publication of the poems would allow them to be accepted by readers without the connotations that might have been attached to his name. All material in the periodical was published anonymously since it was meant to be a reflection of the 'Conductor's' principles, but even in the 'Office Book', which recorded the authorship of published material, Linton is given as 'Miss Lynn's friend'. Linton seems to have transacted his business through Eliza, who was one of Wills' favourites, and viewed by Dickens as 'good for anything, and thoroughly reliable'.⁹ Linton's adaptation of his writing was partly due to the editorial demands of internal consistency: a central aim of the periodical was to give material 'accurate in information and opinion, consistent with one another'.¹⁰

⁸ 'The Burthen Lightened' 11 October 1856 p. 301 (reprinted as 'The Hunchback' in Claribel), 'Word Analogies' 22 November 1856 p. 445, 'Brave Women of Tann' 10 January 1857 p. 35-36 (both in Claribel).

⁹ Layard Life p. 81.

¹⁰ Household Words: A Weekly Journal 1850-1859 Conducted by Charles Dickens. Table of Contents, List of Contributors and Their Contributions compiled by Anne Lohrli Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 11. Further references will be given as Lohrli.

According to Anne Lohrli in her study of authorship in Household Words the periodical was a 'family journal for a middle-class audience, intended, in part, to replace with wholesome fare the 'villainous' periodical literature of crime and sensation'. Lohrli points out the figure of the 'public' in Household Words 'was mainly the middle class', although Dickens himself set out to be inclusive 'of all ages and conditions', and to 'adapt every paper to the reception of a number of classes and various orders of mind at once'. As Lohrli goes on to explain, the lower classes 'were not addressed in Household Words. They were discussed [. . .] and their cause championed' as part of an intention 'to help in the discussion of the most important social questions of the time'. The three main areas of the periodical, social concern, instruction, and entertainment, resembled Linton's editorial practice. The themes of literacy, education, the poor, sanitation, institutional nepotism, especially the purchase of commissions in the army, facts of nineteenth-century society that we now recognise as distinctively Victorian concerns were a perception that Household Words was partially responsible in creating. The editorial policy demanded that these themes were rendered in a 'readable' form 'that their sober presentation in specialized journals [. . .] did not give them'. Household Words differed from similar instructional periodicals 'in its personal attitude' in which 'reader and writer were conversationally bracketed together as having like interests and attitudes'.¹¹ However, Household Words discouraged direct dialogue between the readership and either editor or conductor, unlike the practices of the radical or republican press, within which Linton had developed a sense of authorial purpose and which fostered difference.

¹¹ Lohrli p. 4, 15, 4, 5, 7, 8.

The common ground in the intentions of Household Words with Linton's was matched by the resemblance of Linton's high expectations of his readers to Dickens', shown in his insistence to Wills in 1852 that 'writing down [was] as great a mistake as can be made'. Assumption of the readership's erudition consisted of the literary allusions 'woven into the text of articles'. The editorial policy, in contrast with Linton's notion of 'earnestness', demanded that ideas be treated in a 'lively' style, and many writers set out in non-fiction articles to imitate Dickens' novelistic style, which, as Lohrli points out, resulted in inappropriate language and figurative constructions.¹² The periodical's intentions were congruent with Linton's own, possibly explaining why he wrote for it, and the relative ease with which he adapted his themes of individual fulfilment and sexual equality, articulated in the language of political emancipation in the ER, to the context of Household Words. There was also the issue of money: Household Words paid well for verse, and a writer of verse could expect to earn a relatively high sum for short pieces, as the 'Office Book' shows, with £3.3.0 paid for 'The Burthen Lightened'. Rather than being desperate money-making efforts, the poems were consistent with Linton's other, more strongly worded performances in the radical context. For instance, 'The Burthen Lightened' leads the reader through a symbolic journey in the form of a parable which transforms an image of Bunyan's pilgrim into an emblem of self-reliance, expressed in the form of a parable of self-determination:

¹² Lohrli p. 17, 18, 9-11. Linton's contributions to All the Year Round: 'Great Odds at Sea' 1, 13 August 1859 pp. 378-79, 'Old Friends' 9, 4 April 1863 p. 133, 'Point Blank' ('Narrowness') 11, 27 February 1864 p. 60, 'To his love', 'False Hope' 11, 4 June 1864 p. 396, 'A Dirge' 11, 16 July 1864 p. 540.

All pointed at the Hunchback. He, they said,
 Was hideous; and their scorn
 Doubled the anguish which bow'd down his head, (ll. 5-7)

The moral ramifications seem to grow out of this initial image as the hunchback sets out on an inward quest for the meaning of his burden:

Flung back on his own soul, what he inquired
 Was hardly, sadly taught;
 With desperate travail he at length acquired
 Something of what he sought. (ll. 45-48)

The resolution of the protagonist's quest is attained through his patient acceptance of the burden until 'Time mask'd as Death' unpacks the load and brings about a transformation in keeping with the parable form of the poem. Linton was thus adapting his theme of self-realisation to the family audience of the periodical.

In 'Brave Women of Tann' Linton returned to the ballad metre that he favoured whenever he dealt with folkloric material. In this poem it is employed with a spontaneity that enlivens the theme of the inspirational courage of women.

Linton's relationship with Household Words continued when it became All the Year Round, which was produced 'on the same plan'.¹³ One of the 'English Heroes', 'Grenville', was given prominent place in the first number and was later imitated by Massey, giving rise to a minor literary controversy in 1878 when a writer in Notes and Queries attributed Linton's poem to Tennyson.¹⁴

The 1865 anthology Claribel and other Poems was Linton's first verse publication for nine years. In this collection of earlier verse, a unified aesthetic

¹³ Lohrli p. 24.

¹⁴ W. J. L., to Richard H. Stoddard, 17 March 1878, Stoddard Papers, NYPL.

was implicit in the choice of material. The collection may seem to present a very different writer from the editor of the ER. With the inclusion of the 'Threnody' for Paul Darasz and politically motivated pieces from the 1850s, the poems included in Claribel were not as far from the concerns of ER as Janowitz has suggested, although they do feel retrospective. Some of the lyrics in the collection, such as 'Eurydice', glow with feelings barely contained by the tight formal designs that Linton always chose when writing about loss. The title work 'Claribel' was a blank verse version of a Charles Wells short story that Linton had discovered in 1845. Wells, yet another neglected writer Linton attempted to bring into public prominence in the 1840s, had been a friend of Keats and was an influence on Rossetti. A strong influence from Tennyson has been noted in Linton's subjects, but the variety of verse forms, and the range of subjects from myth, elegy, and love poetry, attempted to unite sentiment, liberalism and lyricism. Figures from national myth and folklore, such as Arthur and Alfred, alternate with verse carrying an overtly political purpose and content.

Linton's last printed poem in England was a fatalistic, worn performance with a feeling of resignation about it.¹⁵ There is one memorable image in it, recalled by Linton's daughter in 1914:

Yet it shall come-the European War,
 However hinder'd or however led;
 And the revenger drive his furious car
 Over the crown'd and coroneted head. ('Yet it Shall
 Come', ll. 29-32)

Linton arrived in New York in November 1866, and his commission from George Dawson to be a correspondent for the Manchester Examiner was carried

¹⁵ Kendal Mercury, 1 Sept 1866. Text from P and V Vol. 16, pp. 146-47

out immediately. Written in a level, factual manner, Linton's dispatches were concerned with the continuing programme of emancipation and the education of former slaves.¹⁶ He noted with approval that 'John Brown's body's in the grave, but his soul is marching on'.¹⁷ There were many things to criticise: the possibility of Southern stubbornness in the Reconstruction, Fenianism, and the corruption of the 'ring' system of urban government. On the whole, the image Linton created of America was positive: 'Though luxury, and misery, and misrule, and much disorder, and all other concomitants of imperfect civilisation here, there is beneath all a substratum upon which to build a better future'.¹⁸ He enjoyed what he perceived as New York's diversity, but found 'a lack of any high ideal of virtue, a low tone of public morality'.¹⁹ Within three years however he would find a more harshly critical direction for his observations in a public forum: 'men, even of high mind, might well prefer the godly law and order of a Cromwell to the lynch-law of democratic America [. . .] which does not perceive that freedom is only the ground of brotherly organization, and that there is no freedom without equality [. . .] In your magnificent Empire City there is no organization enough to sweep the streets after a snow-storm'.²⁰

The earliest of Linton's poems in America were printed in the Anti Slavery Standard, which referred to him on his arrival as 'the English artist, widely and favourably known'. A notebook titled 'Poems 65-66' represents Linton's consolidation of his writing during his last days in England and the

¹⁶ 'My First Visit to New York, letters to the Manchester Examiner, 1866-67', 27 November-29 January, P and V Vol. 17.

¹⁷ 11 December 1866, P and V Vol. 17, p. 21.

¹⁸ 18 December 1866, P and V Vol. 17, p. 25.

¹⁹ 29 January 1867, P and V Vol. 17, p. 56.

²⁰ The Religion of Organisation (1869), p. 17, 19.

early part of his life in America.²¹ The manuscript marks the transition with a heading 'In America', but there is a sense of continuity in the outlook and pattern of his verse writing. Virtually all the verse in this notebook was printed later, although several poems seem to have been written as private meditations on the past, most of which are contained in a sonnet sequence exploring emotion through affective form. The concurrence of similar themes in private and public contexts illustrates the function of verse writing for Linton in his working out of the relationship between personal preoccupations and the demands of the public arena. While there appears to be a considerable gap separating this personal writing from the public performances, there are unifying elements in the form and content of both. Linton's awareness of his shortcomings in finding a creative channel for his political ideas lead us into his final sustained verse synthesis of creative aspirations and public discourse, Broadway Ballads, which is discussed further in the next chapter.

Written in December 1866 and printed in the same month, 'Tennyson and Eyre' appears to be the first of Linton's published poems after emigration, and places its focus on American reactions to English colonial government.²² The poem is resonant with Linton's support for the global extension of the American abolitionist precedent. Linton's approach was to take the idea of precedent in an early lyric by Tennyson, one of Eyre's supporters, and to follow the idea and metre of the original poem in an initially imitative manner which develops into his characteristic method of word play and variation, employed as early as 1839 in the National, and renewed in this poem with energy:

²¹ The notebook contains drafts dated until 1875.

²² National Anti Slavery Standard, 15 December 1866. Further references will be given as NASS.

"Where freedom slowly broadens down
 From precedent to precedent"-
 Such words we read in years bygone;
 Nor thought this broadening freedom meant
 To fence a cavern tyrant's throne,
 And hold him murder-competent. (ll. 1-6)²³

The implication here in 'Such words we read in years bygone' would have been taken to mean that Tennyson had become a lost leader figure, and that the laureate's current views cut across his earlier concern with a gradual distribution of liberty over time. Linton uses Tennyson's terms throughout the poem to disturb its vision of liberty, particularly the key term 'slowly broadens down'. Linton's poem explores the possible interpretations of this idea as a way of understanding human liberty. The first variation on the idea uses the physical aspect of Tennyson's image, turning it, through an image of movement, into a reversal of the original meaning: 'To fence a cavern tyrant's throne', which is linked to and paralleled by the moral ramifications in the ugly compound 'murder-competent'.

In the second verse Linton traces his meaning through the subtle shift from the metrical regularity of the original:

Freedom for Power! But for the slave
 Not trial even, but sword and fire!
 Intended rebel! Let him have
 The scourge and gallows, his desire
 Counted as act; and o'er his grave
 The slower poet use his lyre. (ll. 7-12)

In combination with the irony of 'Freedom for Power' the shift of step from an iambic character to the feel of a falling rhythm has the effect of

²³ Text from P and V Vol. 17.

suggesting the possibility of a change from the established pattern, in this case British imperial policy with regard to colonial government and the treatment of non-white colonial peoples.

The poem's investigation of broadening precedent as an image and a concept of growth continues:

What precedent for freedom's growth?
 A man who rules in England's name
 Is taken with a panic: loath
 To own himself or blind or lame,
 He blusters forth a brutal oath
 And hastes with blood to cleanse his shame. (ll. 13-18)

Linton's radicalism here shows its advantages in understanding Eyre's actions in terms that underline his individual responsibility. In this way the poem reveals the problems of accepting precedent as relevant only to its nation of origin, although Linton asks that we see human liberty as a function of English history, a view that seems to dovetail with Tennyson's idea of 'broadening'.

A precedent that all the years
 Of English striving to protect
 The lowest subject, vainest fears
 Of Power may make of no effect.
 What matter negro blood and tears?
 What matters English honour wreckt? (ll. 19-24)

In the poem's vision precedent applies equally to 'negro blood' and 'English honour'. The poem seems to be anticipating responses to Eyre's actions, presenting individuals representative of exemplary conduct to defend the history of liberty in English culture. The poem integrates the idea of these figures with the variation on Tennyson's image of liberty:

The precedent that Freedom gave,
 When Strafford pleaded innocence,
 Has breadth to avenge and right the slave:
 It broadens not to shield offence-
 Though Tennyson on Milton's grave
 Retain himself in Eyre's defence. (ll. 25-30)

Rather than being a nationalist invention, liberty is conceived of as established by acts of personal integrity, although 'precedent that Freedom gave' contains religious connotations. The description of Tennyson 'on Milton's grave' adds poignancy to the poem's appeal for universal liberty and underscores its implied contrast between earlier and later Tennyson. The word 'retain' develops the variation on the theme of broadening freedom in its suggestion of constriction, but it also carries a set of connotations relating to servility.

As a recent arrival in New York Linton was concerned with the way England was perceived by Americans, and the poem has an element of justification for English concepts of liberty. However, Linton's republicanism allowed him to divert his patriotism from a potentially oppressive national superiority by portraying English authority as concentrated but distorted in the figure of Eyre and his decisions. The poem's view of Eyre as an individual shows Linton's clarity of moral vision when he was presented with such a concrete denial of the principles of humanity which he carried with him to America. The poem represents Linton's polemical verse when conviction and fluency dovetailed: pointed and concise in expression, critical and balanced in outlook.

In an 1867 republication of the ER 'Rhymes and Reasons Against Landlordism', addressed to Irish Americans in New York, Linton was concerned about the presence of Fenianism as a political alternative for the Irish population

of New York.²⁴ This book version of the 'Rhymes' sought to align their concerns to a very different political and literary context from the years of the Famine. Rather than simply recycling old material Linton believed that the themes were still relevant by virtue of their humanitarian outlook 'to meet the occasion' of Fenianism. Other continuities informed Linton's verse writing during these first years in America. Several poems written in response to the Reconstruction returned to rhetoric of 1850s, such as 'An Answer from the South' with its oratorical use of 'we'. Linton never visited the South, although he socialised with African Americans such as Frederick Douglass. However, the verse articulates terms consonant with Phillips and Boston abolitionist sentiment.

1870-74 were years of uncertainty in Linton's personal and creative life: his advertising broadsheet the American Enterprise collapsed in 1871, which led to bitter disagreements concerning the finances of the paper with his brother Henry. There were continuing difficulties with Eliza about Brantwood, and the fluctuating market for engraving caused financial uncertainty. Aspiration and failure in a short-term context were ideas that Linton had linked in his public discourse in the 1850s as an affirmation of progress, but they found less determinate and positive resolution in the context of the writing that he produced solely for himself. However, Linton's public writing continued in its confident adversarial mode, stimulated by particular events in European and American politics, such as his account of the Paris Commune in a sequence of articles in the Boston Radical, subsequently issued in pamphlet form.²⁵ Linton's account of the Paris Commune used articles from the New York Tribune and annotated them with information drawn from French and English newspapers that were

²⁴ Ireland for the Irish by W. J. Linton formerly of the Irish "Nation" (New York: The American News Company, 1867).

²⁵ The Paris Commune (Boston: 1871).

both 'for and against' the Commune. He interpreted the failure of the Commune as the consequence of isolationist attitudes of other French cities. In contexts such as this sequence of articles, where Linton could present his ideas in sustained prose arguments, the sentences and concepts develop over long sentences which unfold according to an oratorical rhythm which is close to the movement of his blank verse:

Our business, our hope, is no longer isolation, but association and devotion to humanity. The Christian theory of *Right* is a problem worked out and demonstrated. We have no new phase of it to learn. But we have to learn the new gospel of Communion, the Duty of fellowship. Not again the hermitage in which the world may be forgotten; not again the Commune of old time, jealously guarding itself from the world, an armed sentinel, as inhumanly if not as tyrannously egotistical as the robber lord or more imperial brigand against whom it then was justified in keeping guard; no longer the narrow national and inhuman policy of "avoiding entangling alliances." The hermit must quit his cell for active citizenship, the Commune labor for and with and under order of the nation, the nation own itself a citizen of the world.²⁶

The force of the prose derives from the success in which abstract ideas are linked together, with an urgency imparted to it through the ideas Linton wants a reader to apprehend. The Commune also inspired a poem, 'The Vendome Column':

Rebuild your column! T'was not so fair
But there are lacqueys of Usurping Power
(True priests and panders of each living hour,
Who use their inspiration so, and dare
Call themselves artists) who may well repair
The shatter'd masonry. It can be done.
But quickly! Else ere it be well begun
Some new iconoclast is passing there.
Rebuild it! And yet never nevermore
Can you set up the old image on its height.
Complete, remaineth still the vacant site:

²⁶ The Paris Commune, p. 25.

I vain shall power rebuild or art restore.
Men, gazing, still forget "Napoleon"
And only see the Commune overthrown.²⁷

While the poem demands some knowledge of the Commune, of how 'all statues and vestiges of monarchy' were demolished on 16 May 1871 as monuments to 'a perpetual criminal attempt against [. . .] Fraternity', the particular events of the Commune are restated in the sestet in a way that stimulates reflection on the nature of political power and its relationship to memory.²⁸ The idea of reconstruction suggests that historical change is a matter of perception which in the sestet takes the form of a reversal about broader patterns of historical change. The contradictions in the poem lead to the thought-provoking final couplet in which the communal amnesia through which the previous order is rebuilt in a form dictated by the most recent events. The poem also suggests that without a longer perspective the process of reconstruction is undermined from the outset.

The increasingly personal concerns of Linton's poems represent his continuing search for a mode of verse writing which satisfied his prejudices about form while allowing him to work out his anxieties about his status as a writer. Despite the provisional feeling of many of these poems, they create an engaging view on the condition of feelings related to depression from the perspective of introverted isolation.

As soon as Linton arrived in America he began to reflect on the past. In the notebook 'Poems 1865-66' he wrote a sequence of poems assuming a viewpoint from which he might put his experience into perspective, provisionally

²⁷ Written 28 May 1871, printed in the National Standard, 2 June 1871.

²⁸ The Paris Commune, p. 15.

called 'Astrophel Again'. Like his model, Linton's speaker sets out to prove himself worthy of love. As in Love's Diary the notebook shows Linton using his verse writing as a personal process of consolation about the past. This process resolves out as the past in an image of an anima figure in an enclosed garden:

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen" — I read,
 "Saddest of all are there, It might have been."
 And reading so I lift the bar between
 The Present and the Possible, and lead
 My sad thought by a path of tangled weed
 Into the garden of a dream serene [. . .]
 Do I not know that all my dream of thee
 Is nothing more— a vision of the In-vain? (Poem 26, ll. 1-6, 13-14)

In the 'Astrophel' poems Linton encloses the personal element within the formal boundaries of the sonnet, suggesting that the self-contained form created a necessary distance between his experiences, and his reflections on them. The 'Astrophel' poems also construct a relationship with experience in images of the past as a form of refuge or retreat. The reflective nature of the poems suggest that the past may be read, and revisited, as an experiential golden age. The concerns and methods of these personal lyrics compare with the published verse where forms work within a tradition of formal enclosure of emotion where the speaker is free to invent without revealing the depth of personal preoccupations.

Linton's other personal meditations are written from a similar viewpoint. These poems are concerned with images of transience and memory that result in an ambiguous consolation for the speaker, who casts around for terms with which to satisfy a need for coherence between past and present:

I have known all things: what can now remain?
 Scars of the worst, some memories of the best.
 Methought, I track'd some way the High Behest
 And gave my life to Truth! Was all in vain?
 Mine own thoughts forge for me an iron chain.
 I have known all – but death – that may be rest.
 ('Nirvana' ll. 9-14)²⁹

In this poem the image of memory as a chain concurrently suggests continuity and limitation. Another poem shows Linton's exploration of the 'ghost of sadness', which seems to have been his term for the depression that attended life at Appledore. The feeling is initially represented as an external influence:

Even as the mercury falls however light
 The cloud that for a moment veils the sun,
 So sinks my spirit, nothing said or done,
 Darken'd by passing thoughts content should slight.
 The ghost of sadness haunts me in despite
 Of will or reason; all in vain I shun
 The phantom, known as such; oppose or run,
 The shadow covereth me, and day is night. (ll. 1-8)³⁰

The poem shows Linton's awareness of the therapeutic role of verse writing at this point in his life since he used it to state for himself how his depression grew out of 'passing thoughts content should slight' which, though inescapable and resistant to will, held the consolation is that they are 'known as such'. A companion sonnet tries out the same idea and finds a more successful resolution in which continuity of expression coincides with music as emotional 'exorcist':

²⁹ Written 9 April 1871, 'Poems 1865-66', Beinecke.

³⁰ September - October 1873, 'Poems 1865-66', Beinecke.

But as with Saul, in my most gloomy hours,
 When will sits unobey'd, a king discrown'd,
 Even thought proved false, an exorcist is found;
 And that usurping fiend to music's powers
 Succumbs-as fell the haughty Philistian towers
 By Jordan at the miracle of sound. (ll. 9-14)

In these poems Linton was looking for a way of understanding his feelings. Linton wrote as if from the threshold of death not through morbidity, as an early biographer assumed, but because it was a point from which could justifiably enter the past.³¹ His writing has affinities with Bryant's in this sense, and his sympathetic illustrations of 'Thanatopsis' show how close is his perception of viewpoint. The point of death offers the best perspective if he imagines himself there.

The writing in personal and public contexts was concerned with working through self-doubt. During the period 1856-1875 continuity was becoming more important as an element of Linton's personal and public creativity. This was a response to the number and significance of the changes that took place in his life over this time. In reflecting on the past Linton, like any daydreamer, preferred his own world to that supplied by other writers. He was however aware of this widening gap between creative aspiration and public discourse. The next chapter explores how he set out to close this gap in his work in 1875.

³¹ Neiman, p. 384.

Chapter Six: 1875-1896

When he reviewed the year's work at the end of 1875 Linton was struck by his fertility of production: 'I have this year earned \$5000 and written 5,000 lines of verse: not bad work between 62 and 63 [. . .] My verse includes Pot Pourri-Broadway Ballads-Famine, a Masque- England to America'.¹ Professional success as an engraver continued to give Linton a sense of confidence about his status in relation to existing American artistic culture, reinforced by the public appreciation of his editorial work and books on wood engraving. His editorial work from the mid 1870s shows his developing concern with the collection and preservation of his poetry. The previous chapter established that his personal theme of continuity was tempered by a sense of self-doubt when he wrote for himself, leading to a sense of self-enclosure in the purpose and imagery of the writing. Certain aspects of his editorial activity also reflected his continuing personal anxiety about the survival, recognition, and the value of his own writing. A poem dedicated to William Bell Scott shows that Linton had started thinking about his earlier writing in terms of wasted potential:

Methinks that I have been too much in haste,
 Shooting my bird-bolts. Although most fell aside,
 Some hit my aim; and thereon in my pride
 I drove forth more, in any vantage placed,
 Unheeding either skill or arrow's waste.
 What care? In the eagerness of youth I cried.
 Now, when I fain had higher venture tried,
 My bow is weak, and I pass on disgraced. (ll. 1-8)²

However, this self-doubt became at points in his writing in the 1870s a creative self-searching. This chapter thus focuses on the increased significance to Linton of the realisation of his private, personal concerns in relation to his continued, equally

¹ W. J. L., to Willie, 31 December 1875, Feltrinelli 1/18B.

² Written 17 September, 1875, 'Poems 1865-66', Beinecke.

personal, commitment to the idea of poetry as a function of public duty. In concentrating on the private aspects of the creative process this chapter also investigates Janowitz's conclusion that 'under the impact of the liberal cultural authority, Linton was diminished to a minor figure in high-culture poetics', an argument that depends very much on the perception that Linton's published writing in the 1870s represented his whole output at this time.³ A significant amount of writing remains in Linton's immaculately produced but extremely rare Appledore editions, none of which have been reprinted.⁴ In many, if not all of the Appledore works the material was written several years before Linton managed to print it. The wood engraving books, The Masters of Wood Engraving and History of Wood Engraving in America were certainly written over several years during periods when engraving contracts slackened off. Consequently, this chapter seeks to discuss Linton's writing, wherever possible, in the context of composition. The published text and its reception has been an important element throughout my discussion of Linton's combination of creative aspiration and public discourse. In arguing for a higher degree of subtlety in Linton's later verse than Janowitz allows in her view of him as diminished by his contact with the liberal hegemony, this chapter attempts to convey the range of his work in the 1870s.

Reflection on experience since arriving in America was the unifying feature of Linton's verse writing in 1875-76. The critical and satirical nature of this writing informed his decision to adopt the pseudonym Abel Reid, an authorial persona that he hoped would create wide appeal for his work. He made this intention apparent to Adams: 'Abel Reid takes after me-and I hope may take with the public'.⁵ But he did have other motives in using the mask. He went on to explain the purpose of Abel Reid as the author of Pot-Pourri, a book of Poe imitations: 'only one person knows of it as

³ Janowitz, p. 216

⁴ For a full list of APP productions c.f. R. M. Sills, 'W. J. Linton at Yale: The Appledore Private Press', Yale University Library Gazette, 12 (January 1938), 43-52.

⁵ W. J. L., to Adams, 28 March 1876, Houghton.

mine [. . .] I want to be sure everywhere of criticism quite independent of personal motives. For another reason-following things will speak too plainly for even some friends'.⁶ The 'following things' that Linton felt would 'speak too plainly' included responses to American society in the form of satirical verse. The strongest of these was Broadway Ballads, written in 1875 and dedicated to his companion in the anti-slavery party Wendell Phillips.⁷ As well as attempting to convey the shape he had given to his experiences as an émigré in an American city, Linton wrote the Ballads to resolve through verse his anxieties about the combination of personal creativity and public discourse. As with most of his later work, the intended audience for the writing seems to have been conceived of as aware of literary precedent, well-read, and concerned about the ways in which individuals related to culture. In the case of Pot-Pourri, the basis of Linton's adversarial position was the popularity of Edgar Allan Poe's poetry as representative of contemporary taste. The 1870s therefore represent a refinement of Linton's earlier use of verse as a mode of reflecting on contemporary culture. Other work in 1875 returned Linton to his fascination for collating and editing poetry. The Poetry of America 1776-1876 represented his public ambitions as an editor and commentator on American culture, and marked the beginning of a series of anthologies meticulously prepared by him.⁸ From 1877 these publications were set, illustrated and printed by him on his own press.

In addition to these publishing and authorial activities Linton was for the first time free to choose and produce his own illustrations. His editions of William Cullen Bryant's poetry led to the production of two fascinating works in the field of illustrated poetry: Thanatopsis in 1874 and The Flood of Years in 1877. In these editions Linton combined his abilities and experiences as an engraver, critic, and writer. 1874 to 1877

⁶ W. J. L., to Willie, 30 April 1875, Feltrinelli 1/18B.

⁷ Broadway Ballads, dated fair copy manuscript, Beinecke.

⁸ Poetry of America 1776-1876 (London: George Bell, 1878, reprinted in 1887). Further references will be given as Poetry of America.

therefore represents a significant period in Linton's development as a writer: he was during this time producing works in which his personal, creative and public aspirations converged.

Abel Reid was first used for Pot-Pourri, a privately printed collection of Poe imitations, which Linton described as 'a small pamphlet I have just had printed a propos of the Poe controversy now raging'.⁹ According to a recent study of Poe, 1875 was 'a turning point in Poe's reputation'.¹⁰ The popularity of Poe's verse brought out Linton's adversarial tendency because he found it difficult to accept contemporary praise of Poe's verse given its focus on poetry as a form of creativity completely separate from ideas of truth. Literary recognition continued to elude Linton, despite his commitment to prominent social themes. However, Linton was careful to explain that his criticism derived not solely from his avowed antipathy to the subjects of Poe's poetry, but on the nature and roots of Poe's burgeoning reputation:

Tomb'd in dishonour! Not like thine own Ghoul
Have I thus dug thee out, Unhappy One!
For critical devouring; but some words
Writ heedlessly above thee call for words
Of answering rebuke. [. . .]
My mocking words aimed at, not thee, but those
Who would strain praise for thee, disgracing truth. ('Under-Lines
on a Poet's Tomb', ll. 1-5, 16-17)

A criticism of Poe's popularity as an indication of the tenor of mass American taste formed the basis of Linton's critique, but Poe's theory of the poem as self-contained aesthetic object operating separately from truth or ethical value was also an aspect of Linton's imitations. For Poe, adherence to socially defined duty was an incidental, even accidental, but not mutually incompatible quality of creativity. Linton's sense of public commitment reacted to this idea, although it is ironic that Poe's

⁹ Pot-Pourri (New York: S. W. Green, 1875). W. J. L., to Willie, 30 April 1875, Feltrinelli 1/18B.

¹⁰ Jeffrey Meyers, Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy (London: John Murray, 1992), p. 264.

inwardness attracted Linton's criticism when his own verse was increasingly preoccupied with recalling and renewing the emotions of personal events in youth in a self-enclosed style. Linton found a gap between the verbal play in Poe's verse and its purpose, a criticism that could, and has been, applied to Linton.¹¹ However, Linton understood the expressive ideal in 'Israfel' as the notion that the quality of feeling defines the nature of poetry rather than contact with truth:

If Israfel
 In heaven needs his own heart-strings for his lyre-
 The only organ of harmonious worth-
 Shall not earth's poet? And if he be weak,
 Rent by ill memories, harsh with sour desire,
 Untunable, rejoicing not on good,
 Can aught but discord issue? Speech absurd
 Of "art for art's sake!" when art is not art
 Out of the circles of the universe,
 Out of the song of the eternities,
 Or unfit to attend the ear of God. (ll. 5-15)

In Pot-Pourri Linton used his imitative facility as a mode of criticism in the parodies that took the thematic elements and formal qualities of Poe's verse and extended them to the point of absurdity, justifying this through a quotation from Disraeli's Curiosities of Literature: 'Parody will only strike at what is chimerical and false; it is not a piece of buffoonery so much as critical exposition'. Linton's point seems to be that Poe's verse is too easily imitated.

The writing in Pot-Pourri is an example of how, in contrast with a model he criticises, Linton's own verse is competent, safe, not intended as experiment or personal expression, but understood as a transparent window, a mode of looking at something outside of himself. Linton thus exposed his blind spot on the nature of poetry as personal expression. His perception that 'art for art's sake' made creativity distinct

¹¹ Janowitz, p. 204, Bose, p. 201.

from political consciousness and public commitment reveals his own insecurity about the nature of his own verse. Attention to manuscript poems in the previous chapter show that just as Linton was finding Poe's verse solipsistic, he was writing imitative poetry and casting around for his own voice in verse that concerned his own inward preoccupations. This search for a voice enters into the Broadway Ballads as a central theme.

Linton thought highly of the Broadway Ballads and planned to print it as one of the first books issued from his press in 1877: 'some of the Ballads are, I think, the best things I have written. The Ballads are part satirical, sarcastic, part pathetic, earnest-the ode at the end grave and serious. This is not to be known as mine but will come out-when I can afford it-as Abel Reid's'.¹² However, the pressure of more immediately lucrative work and the need for a steady income in the form of engraving contracts intervened.¹³ Like Famine, a Masque, also written in 1875, the Ballads remained in unpublished form until much later. Despite the purpose of the Ballads in its description of the American city as the site of hardship, there is no evidence that he approached a publisher to bring his perceptions into the public domain. Linton may have recognised that the form of his observations about Broadway as an emblem not only of New York but of America was too contentious for an American audience around the Centennial year, and that he probably would have had difficulties finding a publisher for the Ballads at any time because of its acidic criticism of the empire city. In any case the bluntness of the satire and the references to prostitution in some of the poems could have damaged his standing in the Century Club, and the long delay in publication, even on his own press, might be explained by his protection of newly won recognition as a literary man. In addition he had a reputation for a 'genial' nature in the literary circles with which he was associated, a reputation that would have been affected by the edge of

¹² W. J. L., to Willie, 31 December 1875, Feltrinelli 1/18B.

¹³ W. J. L., to Willie, 26 October 1877, Feltrinelli 1/20.

bitterness in the Ballads.¹⁴ As he confided to his son, the pseudonym Abel Reid was partly a protection from this eventuality. Thus, in America, the relationship between status and writing became closer for Linton, despite his increasingly critical outlook on American culture. Whatever the reasons for the time gap between composition and publication, by the end of 1877 the problem of finding publishers was partially solved: Linton bought his own printing press and installed it in a converted room of Appledore.¹⁵

Linton shortened the manuscript versions in the published text, but it is not possible to determine at what point between he made these alterations. He added a set of illustrations, the idea and execution of which probably dates from 1875-76. Since Linton produced his last engraving in 1892 it was unlikely that he cut the blocks around the date of publication in 1893. It is possible that the engravings were an afterthought, but they are too close to the initial spirit of the satire for this to be the case. These engravings are of Linton's customary eclectic nature, and are more in the nature of emblematic commentary than illustration in the modern sense. Linton's adaptation of a figure from Blake's America as an image for one of the Ballads, 'Our New Decalogue' (Fig. 23), his later use of a Blake design for Famine, written in the same year as the Ballads, fragmentary notes made in 1876, and echoes of Blake in his illustrations of William Cullen Bryant's poetry between 1874-76, indicate that he was pondering Blake's designs around this time. In their style of execution and function within the text, the Ballads images closely resemble Linton's work on his illustrated editions of Bryant discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁴ W. J. L., to Willie, 5 November 1867, Feltrinelli 1/15. R. H. Stoddard, The Critic, 32 (Jan. 1898), 29.

¹⁵ W. J. L., to Willie, 26 October 1877, Feltrinelli 1/20. W. J. L., to Willie, 11 December 1877, Feltrinelli 1/20.



Figure 23. W. J. Linton, artist, engraver and printer, page from Broadway Ballads (1893) showing his adaptation of an image from Blake's America and part of 'God is not Dead'.

Despite its late publication date, it is appropriate to treat the Ballads in the context of its composition, since the work reflects the writer's preoccupations and concerns during his early experience in America, and his consolidation of them in the form of verse. Indeed, the Ballads as a 'collection' sets itself within a particular year: Linton heads some of the ballads with extracts of accounts of personal misfortune and social deprivation from the 1875 New York press. From these extracts, and from his personal experience of New York life, he developed the verse. The dedication of Broadway Ballads to Wendell Phillips, an admirer of Linton's writing, suggests that Linton might have been courting favour with the abolitionist orator with a view to having the verse printed in one of the Boston radical periodicals such as the National Standard, which had already taken notice of his verse.

Linton's perspective on New York presented in the verse was shared by most nineteenth-century observers of the city, who frequently commented on the prevalence of physical suffering, prostitution, cycles of economic exploitation, and the decay of older settlements, exacerbated by 'a quality of ritual expiation in New York politics' in which 'a law testified to the city's good intentions. Administrative neglect allowed the relieved sinner to continue undisturbed'.¹⁶ Broadway too, as the major thoroughfare, was generally perceived of as a window on to New York as the representative American city. One popular survey of the city published in the 1870s stated: 'to write the history of Broadway would require a volume, for it would be the history of New York itself'.¹⁷ The early 1870s was a period of difficulties for New York as a community. In 1875 the city was recovering from the corruption of Boss Tweed's powerful centralised administration in 1870-72, about which Linton had written an illustrated squib in 1871. The crisis of the Tweed administration precipitated anxieties at all levels about threats

¹⁶ Seymour J. Mandelbaum, Boss Tweed's New York (New York: John Wiley, 1965), p. 159. Further references will be given as Mandelbaum.

¹⁷ James D. McCabe, Jr., Lights and Shadows of New York Life; or, the Sights and Sensations of the Great City (1872), facsimile edition (London: André Deutsch, 1971), p. 118.

to individual liberties implied by strong party government on one hand and the effectiveness of the decentralising tendencies of the subsequent reform movement. The existing problems of the city were exacerbated by continuing uncertainty about what form long-term urban development ought to take.

Linton's considered response to life in an American city was written from a Wordsworthian anti-urban perspective consonant with contemporary poetic responses to city existence. However, the Ballads form an interesting counterpoint to the dominant contemporary attitudes to the city in the sense that 'poets of Whitman's time did not even bother to criticize the city; they simply ignored its existence'.¹⁸

An extract from Juvenal's 'Satire I' opens the Ballads, suggesting the relevance of the Latin poem's outlook to a survey of the modern city:

"Omne in praecipiti vitium stetit [. . .]
 dicas hic forsitan unde
 ingenium par materiae? unde illa priorum
 scribendi quodcumque animo flagrante liberet
 simplicitas? cuius non audeo dicere nomen?" (ll. 149-153)

In using the extract from Juvenal in its Latin form Linton places himself in a tradition of Juvenal paraphrases in English. His familiarity with Juvenal dated from at least 1854, when he wrote, in a review and translation of Victor Hugo's Chatiments that a writer dealing with contemporary themes 'needs the fiercest invective, the burning denunciation of a Jeremiah, the taunting irony, the corroding satire of a Juvenal'.¹⁹ The particular section from the First Satire that Linton used contains the germ of the subsequent themes in the Ballads: the endurance of vice, the task of matching authorial voice to the theme of contemporary society, in this case New York in the 1870s, and the

¹⁸ Christopher Beach, The Politics of Distinction: Whitman and the Discourses of Nineteenth-Century America (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996), p. 103. Further references will be given as Beach.

¹⁹ ER 1854, p. 188.

reclamation of personal expression as a way of 'naming' anxieties about society.

Linton's cropping of the extract reduces the pessimistic outlook of Juvenal's speaker on the relationship of present to past by omitting the lines in the Latin directly before his extract: 'Nil erit ulterius quod nostris moribus addat / posteritas', in which there is no sense that it might be possible to change the continuous cycle of vice in the future. Instead, Linton puts 'omne in praecipiti vitium stetit' in the centre of the reader's attention. At an early point in the Ballads Linton's speaker responds to the continuity of vice: 'Curses being, as Hope is, childless: / And all things go on the same' ('Introduction' ll. 35-36). The idea of vice as a cycle is complicated by the equivalence of childlessness and continuity in the poem, a productive paradox that causes the reader to ponder the nature of vice as a recurrent feature of society. This kind of couplet is also an example of how the presence of the epigrammatic within the ballad opens the ballad form up to the individual reader's continued reflection. The presence of Juvenal at the very beginning of the Ballads acts to widen the context of the verse and its potential audience. The Latin text sets this tone of literary reference, but the use of Latin in no way excludes the broadness of the message about the city.

In the Ballads Linton was therefore concerned with the implications of the temporary appeal of poetry that had palpable designs on its readers. This concern with the relationship between verse growing out of journalistic concerns and the enduring nature of the parable as an observation on the universal patterns of behaviour is made one of the themes at the outset. Linton sets up a tension so that he can investigate it. This is implicit in the form of the ballad, which carried with it a long history of transposition into collections as a stable literary form of popular oral culture. In the Ballads Linton located the traditional elements of ballad narrative into a self-conscious context that linked with his earlier use of ballad as an appropriate vehicle for contemporary subjects in the English Republic 'Rhymes'.

Like the 'Satire I', Linton's verse was based on specific instances of modern vice, with individual poems concentrating on episodes that record vanity and greed with the contemporaneity of the events supported by extracts from the New York press. The observations are thus located firmly within contemporary American society in the form of specific aspects of vice in the modern urban context, dealing also with the status of European émigrés in the American republic, a concern that brings up its own continuities. However, Linton, with his republican models of society and the self, and his experience of the city, creates a sense not only of enduring vice, but of a unified system of mutual exploitation. In reading the whole of the Ballads the reader is given enough material to reflect on the wealth and luxury, and the corollary disappointments and rejections in other parts of the city, as if they are necessary counterparts to each other. As well as being the shape of exploitation, the figure of unification or wholeness, is also the figure for the more benevolent type of community implied throughout the sequence: the poems present experiences of the city in terms of images of continuity which, however, may be used to yield divergent conclusions. In Juvenal, Linton's model, the satire proceeds by giving vignettes of individual vice while the reader is reminded of the over arching 'Omne in praecipiti vitium stetit'. In framing his writing as a version of Juvenal Linton had set up the terms of his satire in demanding an authoritative combination of wholeness and specificity. This idea informs the theme and structure of the Ballads.

The account of the city and its inhabitants in the ballads themselves is removed several times from Linton as their author by a 'Preface' in which different modern professionals relinquish responsibility for the human dimension of the city. There follow an 'Introduction: Of the Ballad Singer', a cryptic parable, and 'The Singer's Apology'. When the account of the city begins in 'Somewhere in Hell' it is distanced even further from Linton's authorial identity by being framed as a dream journey into

hell, influenced by Shelley's 'Peter Bell'. The adoption of the persona of the 'ballad singer' shows Linton's continued need to deflect the reader from the subjectivity of his individual perceptions by employing the figure of an outside observer. This distancing of author from speaker is created in the structure of the opening sections, which slip gradually from the implied presence of the author in the selection and cropping of the Juvenal extract, to the different monologues in the preface, to the introduction of the ballad singer, eventually reaching the first ballad. The 'Preface', 'Introduction' and the other framing verse is also used to create a sense that each poem presents a different fragment of the same narrative, and an awareness of individuals within a fragmented community.

The blank verse of the 'Preface' responds to Juvenal's question about fitting style to subject, 'unde / ingenium par materiae?', and brings in the idea running through the Ballads of the city as an enclosed cycle of mutual exploitation. This idea is condensed in the graphic emblem at the end of the section which resembles the Buddhist symbol of unity. In the 'Preface' each voice follows on from the previous one, passing on the responsibility for finding an appropriate voice for describing the city. The first voice, 'Priest', begins with a question, and proceeds to solve his role in the question posed by Juvenal:

Doubt it? It is too plain, too widely spread:
And much to be deplored. But what to do
I know not. Speak more plainly? Can one name
These sins in the ears of babes or white soul'd girls?
Or brand with pointing finger reverend sires?
God's wrath against all offenders once pronounced,
I may not say-Thou art the man! and Thou! (ll. 1-7)

The allusion to Poe in line 7 suggests that we imagine the Priest's identification of plain speech with accusation.

The voice of the 'Poet' follows from the 'Priest'. He sees his office as distinct from sociality, founded on the principle of pleasing the self, an inwardness emphasised by the rhyme 'mine' and 'mind':

And yet your office is to preach: as mine,
God thank'd! to fashion beauty at my mind.
Art for itself sufficeth. Am I pleased
With mine own work, that is well nigh enough. (ll. 8-11)

The lineation here has an arresting effect on the reader: until the reader reaches the end of the second line, the line 'And yet your office is to preach: as mine' is made to hold as a coherent statement, suggesting momentarily that poetry and 'preaching' may not be mutually incompatible. This reading is made possible by the splitting of the sentence in the ending of the line, the punctuation, and the poet's breath of relief 'God thank'd!'. These pauses are given as an opportunity for readers to draw their own conclusions.

The next voice is the 'Scientist', who begins pragmatically with a view of his role that, in stressing the certainties of empirical enquiry, excludes duty. The 'Scientist' suggests that the proximity of the 'Journalist' to 'our passing misdeeds' seems most promising as a way of offering 'Instructive comment, and some moral point, / Touching the very freshness of the raw' (ll. 23-24). But the 'Journalist' remains cautious of 'physiological' matters, and expresses an anxiety about 'affronting Custom' to the extent of damaging audience expectations, and sales. Linton may have included a journalist because of the prominence of the press in American urban and political life.²⁰

The final speaker is identified only as 'A Voice'. This speaker attempts to find a way of addressing the apparent shortcomings of the previous speakers and their

²⁰ Mandelbaum, p. 129.

approaches to the question 'unde / ingenium par materiae?' The implied solution requires a coherent way of seeing:

True Seer! behold the perfectness of life
And beauty know as beauty of the whole
Not fragmentary. (ll. 31-33)

In this context 'Art forbids one flaw; / Nor while one wrong continueth shall the Best / Insure redemption' (ll. 33-35), which brings with it a demand for a different kind of unity from that built up through the account of the city offered in the ballads.

The 'Preface' offers caricatures of perspectives on the present in which each voice passes on responsibility to the next. This is the first instance of the city as a circular pattern. But as author Linton intervenes in the form of the 'Voice' and pulls his ideas together by suggesting that moral responsibility involves a wholeness of vision, in this instance in the small scale form of satire 'When the teachers fail [. . .] wield the sharp scourge of the satirist'.

The 'Voice' leads the reader into the 'Introduction' where Linton followed up the possibilities of integrating ballad form and personal elements such as reflection and meditation. The ballad singer is presented within the collection as one of the protagonists. At the same time he is 'a Stranger to that city – / Say the city was New York' (ll. 1-2). As a new arrival to an apparently randomly chosen city the speaker records an outside perspective, while bringing with it a moral framework that colours his observations. His subjectivity is thus justified as an external view; the ballads come from the observer, not from within New York. In other words, the speaker is Linton's ideal, occupying different spaces at once, or a reflection of Linton's authorial aspirations in America, distant yet involved. The form seems to support this idea; ballad has the flexibility to be at once vernacular and formal, emotional and distant. But

the ballad singer is seen from an external perspective, the poem is 'of' the ballad singer, and therefore still a frame to the ballad sequence which gives the account of the city. The status or position of the speaker in relation to the occupants of Broadway is therefore one of the first concerns in the Ballads, and a reader is constantly reminded that the speaker is conditioned by moral motivations. This opens up a space for the reader to consider the nature of the didactic voice in the collection. And yet, like Linton's other successful verse, the work as a whole is enriched by a unifying purpose, an aspect that is made a theme of the Ballads. At the core of the satire is the speaker's outrage at the disregard for the Christian message of mutuality in which complacency figures as a smiling bystander. The authority of Linton as author becomes a problem at points where the evidence is generalised and formalised, but unlike his earlier verse the Ballads shows Linton's awareness and acceptance of his fallibilities.

Rather than an admission of ineffectuality, 'The Singer's Apology' allows for the true variable, the reader, in stressing intention while accepting that the effects of the verse remain possibilities only:

My words have no ill scope:
And if they do no good,
Forgive the offender-Hope,
Dreaming they would. (ll. 1-4)

'Somewhile in Hell' follows, with its white line engraving of Washington, an image which is consonant with the tone of the Ballads in its use of a national icon (Fig. 24). Like Linton's use of Broadway, the image illustrates a disparity between the original republican aspirations of Independence, and the reality of urban life in America. Whether the tear across the image is due to an act of defacement, or decay resulting from long-term neglect, is a decision left to the reader.



SOMEWHILE IN HELL

"He descended into Hell." APOSTLES' CREED.

"Hell is a city." PETER BELL.

I PASS'D somewhere in Hell, not Washington ;
And saw and heard things I now dare to tell.
You may believe them all and every one :
Each one I found in Hell.

Figure 24. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from Broadway Ballads showing illustration and head note of 'Somewhere in Hell'.

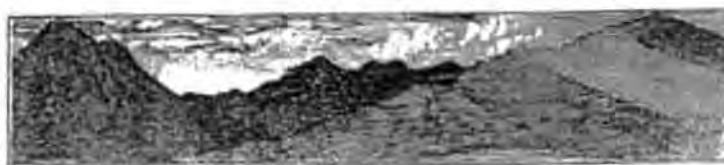


Figure 25. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from Broadway Ballads showing illustration for 'Ad Futuram'.

At the close of 'Somewhere in Hell' the speaker acknowledges his own sense of fallibility as he sees himself reflected in a trusted and reliable friend he finds unexpectedly. When the speaker returns to reality he finds it uncomfortably like the dream he has just escaped from.

The poems in ballad form begin at the poorer end of the scale and gradually work towards vignettes of the well off. Each poem presents a different aspect of mutuality in the city, or lack of it. The first ballad, 'Christie Bell', begins with the meeting of two sisters, one who has become a high-class prostitute, the other a street beggar. The description of the meeting brings together the different extremes of the urban whole that the speaker set out to explore in the 'Preface':

That lovely Lady, Christie Bell,
Which the Deacon loves so well,
What doth she in the plashy street?
And wherefore doth she start to meet
Under the haze of the flaring lamp
(For the shifting gleam seems damp)
A face that she remembers well?—
The Deacon is pulling at the bell. (ll. 27-34)

The opening sections of the poem are characterised by dead ends in diction and content which encourage a reader's curiosity about this meeting of apparent opposites. The sisters' speech is interrupted by a shift in perspective which explains the scene on the street. This extended verse description of their childhood as a rural idyll uses the traditional elements of ballad in a narrative of personal loss, playing them against harsher personal elements to explain the urban present.

When the sisters speak again the stress is shifted to the beginning of the line, giving a sense of urgency. This creates a strong effect of disjunction between the ballad narrator and the protagonists. Their speech shows the ease with which social status can fluctuate in a society governed and unified by individualism and financial gain:

One are we, albeit twain,—
 I 'mid pleasures, thou in' pain.
 We are one in all the woe
 Of our lives, which none may know
 But ourselves. (ll. 82-86)

Caught up in an urban social structure which seals them off from compassion,
 the idea of unity is transformed into a circular, inescapable dynamic:

In our faces as they pass,
 Seeing there, as in a glass,
 Their own vileness, who condemn
 Us for being like to them. (ll. 96-99)

The conclusion relies on the speaker to find meaning in the events. The following four poems, 'A Grape Skin', 'Gone', 'Maid of Broadway', and 'A Girl', continue the story, giving views of the sisters from different perspectives and in different poetic forms, allowing the reader to build up some kind of personal understanding of the city. 'Maid of Broadway' includes further evidence of Linton's idiosyncratic contact with Blake in the use of a short poem as part of the head note, 'When a man marries a wife', which Linton recalled from one of the emblems from the Rossetti Manuscript.²¹ The Blake poem is an epigrammatic comment on expectations of marriage, which relates to Linton's representation of the society beauty as a construct of cosmetic additions, the imagined removal of which causes the speaker no small degree of anxiety:

A wild thought runs my forehead through,
 A thought most miserable:
 That when upon our bridal night
 My love would clasp my whole delight,
 Your best half's on the table. (ll. 31-36)

²¹ Reproduced in *The Notebook of William Blake* ed. by David V. Erdman and Donald K. Moore (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, Readex Books revised edition, 1977), facsimile N14 (4).

Despite the weighting of the Ballads toward contrast as a way of perceiving America, the inhabitants of all social layers on Broadway are presented as victims.

'From a Lamp-Iron', which satisfies the terms set out in the 'Preface', is one of the most powerful single performances in the Ballads. At its core is an account of individual alienation alternating with the cyclic patterns of nineteenth-century European revolutions, personal fate, and disappointed expectations in America. It is the best example of Linton's writing when it develops out of the conventional visionary into an idiomatic style which looks at themes through the voices of the protagonists. The exchanges between the speaker, the men who have found the suicide, and the speaker's self-communing are represented through a regular metre that is given the semblance of spontaneity by constant enjambment. These different elements are 'recorded' by the observer. But this is a long way from the speaker's speculations in 'The Incendiary's Grave' (1837), and its similar act of imagination. In that poem Linton left limited possibilities for the reader's responses. 'From a Lamp-Iron' is probably closer to an actual event in 1870s emigrant New York. The dead man's identity is bound up with his past as a European revolutionary; he is located as an agent of 'human freedom' in revolutionary events still incomplete:

Was he with Poland in her latest fight? [. . .]
 What saw he in the lapse
 Of years? What had he suffer'd, dared, or done?
 One day elate,
 Scanning the Promised Land from perilous
 heights scarce won,
 The next day crush'd by Fate.
 Who now can tell us! None!
 Sad thought can only guess
 His story. (ll. 47, 52-61)

In these lines Linton was recalling Albert Darasz, the Polish revolutionary who died in London. Linton's language echoed his obituary notice in the English Republic:

'The martyr's grave was ready. He might see the Promised Land from the heights of faith; but his bones must lie in the place of exile'.²²

The speaker intervenes and suggests different patterns for the man's personal history, beginning in a 'general way':

Yet, no less
It might be written in such general way
As this: there few words, say –
*A man, who fought for freedom, to the free
Came, and none welcomed, no one fed or heard
His cry for work. He fear'd if he deferr'd
His death, an hour might come when he
Would be too weak for honor:
And so died. (ll. 62-70)*

The speaker is uncertain of his speculations, and tries several versions of the story, ending with one based solely on 'his own words, here writ, in French' (l. 87) on a piece of paper found in the man's clothing:

*He fought in Paris for the Commune, fled
Only when Hope was slain with Delescluze;
In exile, had no where to lay his head –
Vagabond – Christlike. They could not refuse
A grave when he was dead. (ll. 88-92)*

Like many of the Ballads the draft of the poem was longer, but the published version of the poem distinguishes more clearly between the contributions of the speaker's speculations and those of others witnessing the find. Linton's decision to end with an epitaph rather than the long conclusion in his draft version gives the poem, with its measured sparseness of diction, a sense of grandeur. The poetic speaker articulates his observations in formal, balanced metre in 'From a Lamp Iron', which is typical of the poems in the Ballads, although the singer is aware that his ballads are formalised

²² 'Our Martyrs: Albert Darasz', ER 1852, p.195.

versions of a harsh vernacular. There are individual poems that attempt to give the impression of deriving from the city dwellers, a mode which Linton uses to build up his model of city life as a cycle of economic and emotional exploitation. For instance, in 'Boarding' the speaker describes tenement life. Despite his awareness of the exploitative cycle of which he is a part, he lacks a framework through which to imagine or articulate possibilities outside his urban context. This limitation is represented in the poem through the spatial restriction of the tenement.

The synthesis of oral and literary forms, public and private, begun in 'Rhymes' continues in 'God is not Dead'. This poem, with its humorous emblem (Fig. 23), appeals to the attentive ear with its play and variation on the rhythm of the title (/--[/]). Like most of the verse in the Ballads, the poem is tightly structured metrically, with consideration for extended appreciative re-reading.

The white line engraving at the beginning of 'Ad Futuram', the final string of ten poems, shows a mountain range which shades off into shapes resembling sand or waves, a double reading made possible by a style of engraving similar to that used in the Bryant illustrations discussed later in this chapter (Fig. 25). The emblem also plays with contrasts in a manner similar to the method of the verse. The image suggests that the resolution of the speaker's troubling observations about the city may be as imminent and inevitable as sunrise, yet just out of sight. 'Ad Futuram' is a sequence of lyrics linked by a single line of argument giving alternating perspectives on the central theme of the future of urban America, advising, in turns, caution, action and reflection. In many ways, 'Ad Futuram' revisits the sequential structure of the 'Rhymes', in which the cumulative qualities of the sequence build up meaning. However, 'Ad Futuram' shows a significant creative development from Linton's use of sequence in the 'Rhymes' in its reflections on the efficacy of didactic purpose in combination with personal expression. The public elements of Linton's earlier verse writing are present in the didactic nature

of the themes, while the private space of contemplation is implied in the nature of the imagery used throughout 'Ad Futuram'.

The opening of 'Ad Futuram' seems an attempt to sustain a high flown prophetic style in which the modern city is paralleled with Nineveh, deserving the same fate. The speaker in this first part of the sequence is Nehum, but his demand for divine retribution is playfully undermined by a more benevolent response by God to Nineveh than that anticipated in the biblical source:

Is it not mine to spare
Or to destroy? But thou! gird up thy loins
And go among this people yet again; cast forth
Thy words as coins,
Until men know their worth (poem 1, ll. 7-11)

In the second poem a way forward out of the cycle given in the Ballads is presented in the form of analogy with preventive surgery, painful but swift and necessary. The following poem articulates uncertainty about this image of the solution, 'Yet say his zeal hath been / Too loud, too fierce of mien, / (The wisely good physician gentle is as wise)' (ll.1-3). The prevention idea is continued in the form of the speaker trying out different analogies for his purpose in speaking out about urban America, allowing the reader to raise questions about the nature of the threat implied in the martial imagery. The speaker eventually settles on the figure of the sentinel as justification for the tone of warning in the verse. The speaker shows his consciousness of possible failure in his identification with the figure of Cassandra.

In poem four the speaker develops this line of reflection on purpose and method, returning to thoughts about poetic form as a means of speaking about personal perceptions of perceived ills and his need to speak about both: 'Is it pleasant to say words to stir gentle souls with ire / Or a pleasure to fling fire-brands among friends?' (l.

1-2). The self-questioning in this poem casts doubt on the value of writing individual observations as a way of effecting any form of change: 'Hast thou not prosed enough of personal mischances, / Of thy own woes, thy fellows' joys or hopes or griefs?' (ll. 20-21). However, the speaker's idea of poetry in this poem is narrowed by his view of the choice: poetry as pleasurable self-enclosure, or as the invocation of a war-like rhetoric. The refrain of the poem seems to approve the latter: 'Leave now the courtly harp, lay by the pastoral reed; / Set the clarion to thy lips, and bid its war-notes lead!' (ll. 26-27). It is a characteristic feature of the conditional strain of 'Ad Futuram' that the speaker refuses to allow the reader to settle for long on an apparent coda. Poem five modifies this position of confidence by conveying honour on the poet who combines social awareness with eloquence: 'Give him thanks that he only was caring / The herald of Danger reward! / Respect tracks the steps of Endeavour, / The aimer is praised for his aim' (ll. 19-22). This relates to Linton's preoccupation with a sense of his own unfulfilled potential in an image of aim and intention similar to the poem with which this chapter began.

The two following poems enter into a pessimistic outlook on the value of writing about the deeper patterns of exploitation in the city which is countered in poems eight and nine, which develop a response through lyrical images of renewal that generate a sense of hope for the future of America. The parallel between the tide and night sky, with the ebb and flow of universal human traits becomes a productive process which is signalled by the open-ended syntax of the lines and the feeling of continuity in the imagery:

The waves repeat their psalm upon the beach; [. . .]

Nor is man changed. With blossoms as of eld,
Wreathing young lives, and flow and ebb of joy
And grief upon the sands of level years,
And bread of hopes and fears,
Songs of contentment on bird-wings upheld (ll. 2, 10-14).

The last two poems move back into a confident four stress line which, in looking to the past for certainties with which to counter modern hesitation, offers a warning that the continuity of past achievements requires care. It is clear however that the resolution of the sequence, and of the Ballads, seems to return to the lyrical dimension at the end of the 'Rhymes', in which the 'happy land' is intended to be understood as a transcendental location, defined as a community in which personal fulfilment and mutuality are combined.

While 'Ad Futuram' is provisional in its searching sections, the conclusion is confident of underlying direction. There is thus a tension here between the didactic element and the search for a voice, just as the Ballads as a whole shows a tension between the potentially chaotic urban voice, and the formal construction of the verse. The recurrence of images of threat, resolved as the continuity of 'men's passions and greed' (poem 5, l. ll. 28-9), grew out of from Linton's disquiet on the nature of American democracy in the 1870s. However, in the Ballads Linton was concerned equally with the way he was writing about the city as he is with the problems of living in it. The personal significance of this is reflected by Linton's use of a long, six stress line in certain poems, which suggests, and creates, the continuity of an extended process of meditation. The combination of ballad and lyric expression is matched by concerns with the contemporary world, sharpened by a directness of observation. Personal process has become more important to Linton than spreading the word.

This discussion began with the suggestion that the Ballads remained unpublished because the burden of other tasks prevented Linton from doing so. Perhaps Linton had also lost the urge to fight for his verse when he was deriving acclaim and satisfaction from the recognition of his published writing on engraving. The poems could only have genuinely fulfilled their intentions, so integral to the form and manner of expression despite the personal elements, if they were printed in 1875-76. 'Ad

'Futuram' indicates that Linton might have felt disempowered as a writer in the public sphere. The poem asks: 'What service, O my Country is worth bringing, / Thy granaries full and all thy coasts ungrieved? / Is there nothing for thy lover but mere idle singing' (Poem 6, ll. 1-3), and suggests that Linton was content to accept a compromise between his need to speak out and the relative safety of a limited audience for his reflections on American society in Boston radical and abolitionist groups, namely those readers who were predisposed to accept the tenor of his observations. But the poems suggest that their themes are also, perhaps more importantly, the concern of conscience and reflection. Indeed, the Ballads actively encourage private reflection on the nature of modern community in the city, a concern which is ultimately a matter of finding an apposite way of speaking about it.

Like some of Linton's earlier work, the Ballads combines the personal and private meditational aspects of lyric: small scale, emblematic, inward response, with the didactic strain of the ideas that contain the public resonance of duty and observations on the nature of community. 'Ad Futuram' yields itself to multiple readings, representing an encapsulation of the themes of this thesis, of the creative and the public, and the convergence of them according to the adherence to truth that Linton saw as the function and burden of art and poetry. It is ironic that, unlike a great deal of Linton's published writing, his concerns in this sequence reach deeper into his capacity to reflect in personal terms on both society and his own creativity, yet from the viewpoint of publication history it was, and remains, split off from the type of wide audience that the verse sets out to find and address. This is the narrow arena, the closed circle, that Janowitz describes as the end point of Linton's authorship. From the viewpoint of tracing Linton's development as a writer the Ballads represents his mature use of sequence and literary form to work out in a private meditation the boundaries and nature

of public discourse and individual creativity, and is therefore valuable in showing how Linton used his poetry to work out as well as publicise his experiences and convictions.

In terms of viewpoint, a prose poem that Linton may have written some time before he printed it in 1881, Cetewayo and Dean Stanley, gives some idea of the perspective to which he may have aspired in the Ballads. In Cetewayo a Zulu leader is taken on a tour of Westminster Abbey by the Dean. Arriving at the tomb of the French Prince Imperial, Cetewayo passes naïve, but rational, observations:

Cetewayo: I recollect now: some of my Zulus killed him. What business had he there? But there was nothing heroic in his death. Anybody else would have died just the same, - must have done so.

Dean: All our reports agree that he met his fate like a hero.

Cetewayo: Who knows? None of your people saw him die; and No Zulu ever told you. (pp. 7-8)

Despite, or perhaps because of, his alienation from organised politics, Linton was interested in giving the voice and viewpoint of the observer to the cultural outsider.

The idea of defacement in Linton's image of Washington as an illustration in the Ballads may have been linked to his interest in an 1881 article for the London Daily News which likened Whitman's language in the American editions of Leaves of Grass to 'graffiti, the scribblings on street walls of bad little boys'.²³ Given Whitman's achievements, such a reductive understanding of his poetry now seems conceited. The review was matched by Linton's comments on Whitman's poetry which he wrote of as lacking form. Indeed, in contrast with Whitman's innovations, Linton's balladry remains within the formal confines of traditional metre and rhyme, strictly under the control of the 'ballad singer', despite the fact that a reader's attention is drawn from this structure through lineation which gives the visual impression of spontaneity.

²³ London Daily News 1881, cutting dated and annotated by Linton in Stoddard Papers, NYPL.

A comparison of Whitman's with Linton's view of New York is instructive since the Ballads often resemble the rhetoric of the 'fault-finder's or rejector's gait' ('Song of Myself' l. 466) in the prevalent mode of interpreting the American city in the mid century, which Whitman rejected as 'blurt [. . .] about virtue and about vice' ('Song of Myself' l. 464, 1855).²⁴ In discussing the theme of the city in nineteenth century American poetry, Christopher Beach argues that the few urban poems of the mid century were modelled on the Wordsworthian vision of the city in the Prelude. Poems by Linton's associates, such as Stedman's 'Pan in Wall Street', encapsulated Wordsworth's polarisation of types of pastoral and urban experience, to the disadvantage of the latter, masking the close observation of social and personal diversity to which Whitman was responding in the 1855 version of 'Song of Myself'.²⁵ Beach goes on to argue that the dichotomy of urban and pastoral was based on a conservative ideology informed by distinctions rather than by inclusivity. In 'Ad Futuram' Linton retreats into the theme of self expression rather than using types of urban-pastoral experience as a way of resolving these categories or of social engagement. 'Ad Futuram' ultimately emphasises Linton's anxieties about his creative capacities rather than achieving the correspondence of poetic voice to the urban theme which the poems set out to achieve. However, the verse in the Ballads is redeemed from sentimentality by its use of detail which Linton used as a way of playing surface against a personal vision of a more enduring definition of value that notes the gap between intention and effect, or aspiration and reality. The Ballads are also an account of Linton's writing at its best in the energy imparted through its unifying purpose, which is rooted in individual perception, and by the fact that reflection upon didacticism is one of the themes in the poems. The central point about the city, that individuals behave

²⁴ Walt Whitman Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition ed. by Malcolm Cowley (London: Secker and Warburg, 1960).

²⁵ Beach, pp. 112-117.

according to a lowest common denominator rather than being liberated by community, may derive from Linton's admiration of Juvenal, but his vision of an enclosed system within which a very different kind of city is experienced by the less fortunate is a theme that continues to be relevant. The Ballads may be interpreted as a meditation on and refashioning of Mazzini's concept of society, which he had articulated in the ER: 'There are no different, fatally distinct natures, races or castes, on this world of ours-no sons of Cain and of Abel; mankind is one [. . .] we can not suffer any part of this duty [love and cooperation] to be violated, without ourselves feeling again the harm of such violation'.²⁶ The poems in the Ballads play this image out on an American stage and combine the successful qualities of Linton's writing: sequence, concision and inwardness. Broadway Ballads shows how Linton's ideas of self and community were not only defined within his verse, but shaped the nature of his expression. However, with more time for reflection, Linton had internalised his experiences in New York, giving the verse a vividness which it transfers to the reader's understanding of the urban experience. For instance, the image of the city as a unified cycle is suggested at different points through the sequence rather than given. Linton had learned to trust his material, and the reader.

Broadway Ballads was Linton's first sustained verse works unattached to a journalistic or periodical framework, and the Ballads was Linton's late attempt in a sustained work to unite his creative aspirations in verse writing with public discourse. The work encapsulates Linton's later creative preoccupations: the continual presence and acceptance of inequality in the new as well as the old world, and the externalisation of these inner qualities as sharply defined emblem-like figures: 'Worse foes that a nation can know / Are men's passions and greed' ('Ad Futuram' poem 5, ll. 28-9). There is no evidence that Linton intended a comparison between another poem of 1875,

²⁶ Mazzini, 'Italy and England', ER 1852, p. 48.

Famine, a Masque and Broadway Ballads, but in many ways they complement each other: Ballads as a contemporary, forward looking verse sequence, Famine a recollection of the 1840s, stimulated by the economic depression in mid 1870s America.

A more positive view of America and life as an American is implied in Linton's editorial work between 1875 and 1883, but there are still hints of his anxieties about community and the place of his writing in it. Poetry of America was prepared with assistance from Richard Henry Stoddard, the former iron foundry worker turned journalist and poet-scholar. Stoddard had revised Rufus Griswold's 1855 edition of Poets and Poetry of America in 1872, an anthology that had become the standard against which subsequent collections of American poetry, such as William Michael Rossetti's American Poems, measured themselves.²⁷ By mid 1875 Linton had prepared the printer's copy of Poetry of America, and exerted himself to find a publisher in time for the Centennial. For a time in 1875 Routledge was interested, and Linton offered his recently engraved and then unpublished portrait of Whitman as an inducement: 'I have his [Whitman's] consent to use it for my book even before the issue of his'.²⁸ Nothing however came of these negotiations. The anthology was subsequently turned down by the publisher Henry King as not commercially viable despite its 'literary value'.²⁹ It was eventually accepted by George Bell in early 1877 as a permanent volume in the Bohn's Library series. This Linton found gratifying to the extent of informing Bell 'that the money would be entirely subordinate' to the inclusion of the volume in the series.³⁰ It was originally intended that the book would be published in America, but Linton's immediate efforts towards this end were frustrated by Osgood's refusal to release copyrights of his American poets, despite considering Linton 'a friend'.³¹ An American

²⁷ Further references will be given as Griswold 1872.

²⁸ W. J. L., to Messrs Routledge, 26 August 1875, Feltrinelli 1/6.

²⁹ Henry King, to Harvey Orrinsmith, 28 April 1876, Feltrinelli 1/19.

³⁰ W. J. L., to Willie, 24 April 1877, Feltrinelli 1/20.

³¹ J. R. Osgood, to W. J. L., 5 March 1877, Feltrinelli 4/9.

edition never appeared, but Poetry of America was well-received by the writers included in it: Whitman wrote 'I am well content and pleased with the part I am made to bear in it-surely you have made a capital compilation and condensation', praise that was particularly important to Linton.³² Throughout the process of editing Poetry of America Linton thought highly of the final product and, despite the precedent set by Rossetti's American Poems, considered it 'the only complete history and recent examples of U.S poetry yet done'.³³ The extent of this confidence was shown in his comment to his son that it 'will give me a place in literature'.³⁴

The preface of the anthology explains how the composition of the anthology was founded on his reading of American poetry in previous anthologies, augmented by research on and contact with some of the living authors included. While acknowledging Rossetti's anthology, Linton wrote that 'I claim precedence for it as the first fair and comprehensive sample of American Poetry given to the old country [. . .] I may yet make good my venture as not uncalled for, even though but supplementary'. Unlike Rossetti, Linton had access to Stoddard's revisions of Griswold, but in his introduction, Linton gave no indication of what he understood as the qualities of contemporary American poetry that informed his choices, stating instead that the anthology was compiled with the intention of giving 'as many varieties of thought and expression' in American poetry, and a completeness drawn from the 'wider field for selection' available to him. In relation to particular writers, his choices aimed to be 'indicative of the character and experience of the writer', expecting the poetry to speak for itself in this respect without further elucidation. He seemed over sensitive about possible charges of personal prejudice, justifying his choices as 'approved by other critics not committed to my partialities'. While he tried to avoid regional bias 'to make my book

³² Walt Whitman, to W. J. L., 8 May 1878, Beinecke.

³³ W. J. L., to Willie, 27 August 1875, Feltrinelli 1/18B.

³⁴ W. J. L., to Willie, 3 April 1877, Feltrinelli 1/20.

truly representative of American feeling as uttered in verse, a fair and full presentment of the quality of American song, both emotional and artistic', he found that the majority of work derived from the North, particularly the eastern states. The 'emotional', which Linton interpreted as deriving 'from the heart, the true source of poetic inspiration' was represented by a section of 'Negro Song', printed with musical notation.³⁵ This Southern element was also added to counterbalance the predominance of Northern voices in the collection.

Some of the earlier poetry included might have influenced Linton's work in the 1840s, particularly Francis Scott Key's 'Star-Spangled Banner', which relies on the transition from generalised description of an event to its nationalist connotations. Rossetti noted a feature of the reception and quality of American poetry that has a closer bearing not only on Linton's anthology, but on the way his verse developed in the 1870s. Rossetti felt that in Griswold's presentation, 'one is led to perceive that American poetry, in its ordinary character and main current, is strictly reflex poetry. The writers have little to announce or communicate to us: they take up with all the most accepted and well-ratified assumptions in point of character and emotion'.³⁶ In relation to established writers, Griswold had found a great deal to praise in this reflexive element. In relation to William Cullen Bryant for instance, Griswold wrote that 'With no other poet does the subject spring so naturally from the object; the moral, the sentiment, from the contemplation of the things about him'.³⁷ Much of Stoddard's commentary in the revised version of the anthology repeated this criticism of inward contemplation and the reader's participation in it, developed through language as 'the echo of an internal to an external nature, and a harmony resulting from the intimate

³⁵ *Poetry of America* p. ix, x, x-xi, 379.

³⁶ Griswold 1872, p. xxv.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 170.

union of both'.³⁸ Linton explored this characteristic of American poetry in his illustrated editions of Bryant's poems, a poet whose cultural presence in the 1860s stood in the same relation to New England culture as the poet laureate in England. Consequently, as Deirdre Phelps shows in her bibliographic survey of Bryant's publications, there was considerable cultural prestige in the production of illustrations of his poems.³⁹ In the kind of illustrated editions of Bryant published during his life it is evident that his poetry was favoured by illustrators because of his interest in the American landscape. In Griswold's influential anthology Bryant was 'universally recognised as a translator to the world of the silent language of the universe [. . .] With no other poet does the subject spring so naturally from the object; the moral, the sentiment, from the contemplation of the things about him'.⁴⁰ Linton's illustrated editions of 'Thanatopsis' and 'The Flood of Years' develop the language of nature aspect of the poem, retranslating this element into visual form while maintaining the poem's moral vision through a synthesis of intellectual cross references and an intuitive, mystical imagery of solitary communion with nature. Apart from showing the form, content and fulfilment of Linton's mature creative aspirations as a writer and engraver, these illustrated editions concentrated and combined his later preoccupations with and participation in American literary culture, and the value he placed on locating himself within it.

Bryant's poetry was first published in England in Washington Irving's 1832 edition and it is likely that Linton knew of Bryant from his reading of American transcendentalism in the late 1830s. As early as 1845, when Bryant visited Europe,

³⁸ Griswold 1872, p. 609.

³⁹ 'The Edition as Art Form: Social and Authorial Readings of William Cullen Bryant's Poems', *Text: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship*, 6 (1994), 249-85. Further references will be given as Phelps.

⁴⁰ Griswold 1872, p. 170.

Linton was invited to meet him, and to write a poem for his arrival.⁴¹ Linton undoubtedly knew the 1858 illustrated edition of Bryant's poetry engraved by his London rivals the Dalziel brothers which, like the Moxon edition of Tennyson, was a plural production. Despite strong entries by a pre-Alice Tenniel, the landscapes by Birket Foster are lifeless and literal responses to the poetry. Linton described his response to Bryant in the 1830s in, 'England to America: A New-Year's Greeting' (1876):

In youthful days,
Across the ocean hearkening to his lyre,
I turn'd from Wordsworth's verse sublime to admire
The Transatlantic Master first discern'd;
And my soul yearn'd
For Bryant's praise.

This retrospective perspective suggests that Bryant supplanted Wordsworth in Linton's personal canon as the voice of the 'sublime' in the 1830s, a fact that brought Linton's artisan concept of literary culture closer to American Unitarianism. Chapter Two suggested that Linton realised the extent to which his liberal contemporaries in the late 1830s were questioning Wordsworth's status as a representative voice of progressive radicalism.

By the 1870s the poem 'Thanatopsis', first published in the North American Review in 1817, held iconic status in as a vivid contribution to the genre of consolatory poetry. Linton's illustrations participated in this while reinterpreting the poem's contemplative qualities for a modern readership. Bryant himself, once one of the most prominent figures in American literary history, has become fairly obscure. Even recent American literary histories vary in their dating of some of Bryant's poetry. 'Thanatopsis', one of Bryant's earliest works, has been his most enduring, frequently anthologised and translated into musical and visual form. Linton's edition was

⁴¹ Sarah Flower Adams, to W. J. L. (n.d. ?1845), quoted in Neiman, p. 135. Parke Godwin Biography of William Cullen Bryant (New York, 1883) 2 vols, 2, pp. 1-6.

published in 1874, although the date of the first edition is difficult to establish with certainty. The imprint of copies in America reads 'Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874 by G. P. Putnam's Sons'.⁴² The title however gives the publisher as H. M. Caldwell. Linton offers no help: his only reference to the edition appears in his pencil corrections to a proof of an entry on him for the National Cyclopedia of American Biography where he wrote '187-' as the date of the book.⁴³ The composition of 'The Flood of Years' in 1876 is confirmed by a letter, and Linton's illustrated text was first published in 1877 with 'Thanatopsis' and 'Among the Trees' in a single volume.⁴⁴

Contemporary reception of and information about Linton's work on Bryant is sketchy. The readings that follow represent, in the absence of a published critical heritage, explorative interpretations of Linton's response to the poems, based on the structural elements of image and text, and research into the publication methods and histories of the books

Very early during his residence in New York Linton had been asked by a group of engravers to write a history of the craft.⁴⁵ Linton's several works on wood-engraving culminated in The Masters of Wood Engraving, the following extract from which shows his compelling and distinctively analogical way of writing about engraving as a creative rather than mechanical activity:

The engraving of a pictorially finished drawing will entitle the engraver in wood to his full rank as Artist. Wood-engraving, with the graver, is a distinctive art, needs not and ought not to be confined to imitating what it can but seldom equal. The graver has power and a faculty beyond the

⁴² Beinecke, NYPL.

⁴³ Beinecke.

⁴⁴ Bryant to Scribner's, 19 June 1876, The Letters of William Cullen Bryant ed. by William Cullen Bryant and Thomas G. Voss Vol. 6. 1872-1878 (New York: Fordham University Press, c. 1992), p.306 (fn). Three Great Poems: Thanatopsis, Flood of Years, Among the Trees New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

⁴⁵ A. G. Holcomb and nineteen other engravers, to W. J. L., 9 February 1867, Beinecke.

knife. With a plough moved by the artist's hand, shall not the furrow be as his hand is moved by a directing thought? Why should a ploughed line intended to be white in the print have less of meaning than a ploughed line which is to be printed black?⁴⁶

The style is typical of Linton's mature prose, with its use of analogy and recognition of white line as the expression of intelligent and artistic engraving in challenging the hegemony of the vigorous black line style of the 1860s in which the engraver had become a displaced functionary in a production-line process. Most of Linton's writing about engraving was a reflection of and a response to the crisis of interpretational draughtsmanship precipitated by the application of photography in reproduction processes. The specific nature and impact of the tension between photographic modes of reproduction and craftsmanship is a complex subject, beyond the scope of this discussion, but Eric de Maré sums up a more concrete explanation for Linton's adversarial stance on the engraver's entitlement: 'Self-conscious class distinctions became more rigid as the years passed: the artists who drew on the wood were considered to be gentlemen and therefore superior to the mere artisans who engraved their works'.⁴⁷ Closer to the Bryant illustrations was the fact that much of Linton's writing on engraving in America responded to the indigenous practitioners of the New School who adapted photographic techniques in engraving in order to keep pace with developments in modern art, particularly Impressionism. Linton was anxious not only about the engraver's status but also that the reader's responses were rendered less intelligent by the photographic process. The style of the Bryant editions might be read as a way of presenting an alternative to the trends current in literary illustration in the 1870s.

⁴⁶ The Masters of Wood-Engraving (APP 1886, London: B.F. Stevens, 1889), pp. 205-6. Further references will be given as Masters.

⁴⁷ Eric de Maré, The Victorian Woodblock Illustrators (London: Gordon Fraser, 1980), p. 41.

Linton touched on the contemporary relationship between poetic meaning and image in an 1849 Westminster Review article, using language that was echoed fifty years later by George Somes Layard's better-known discussion of the dialogue between text and image.⁴⁸ In singling out Turner's images for Samuel Rogers' Poems, Linton approached the subject with a familiar problem: Turner's illustrations were 'so resplendent [. . .] that we forget the original poverty of the theme in the glory that now endows it'.⁴⁹ Linton observed a quality of expert illustration in the period, where the illustration has more of a lasting effect than its textual stimulus and may, in the case of Rogers or the Moxon 1857 Tennyson, displace the text. Perhaps Linton's activities as a writer informed his sympathy with the type of illustration which brings the reader closer to the text. Linton sets out a possible solution which draws from literary discourse: 'Like a written commentary, or as the variation in music, the pictorial illustration of a book should either expound for the student the doubtful or abstruser passages of the text, or carry on the original idea through avenues of richer beauty [. . .] It should add either distinctness or grace'.⁵⁰ The analogies he uses develop the idea of illustration as knowledge rendered through variation or amplification, in which the performative role of the illustrator is emphasised. The term 'elucidation' presents illustration as a mode of clarifying a particular reading of the text which is inevitably a reflection of the individual illustrator's realisation of the verbal meaning in visual terms. The potentially limiting features of the personal vision is resolved in the idea of commentary and variation, terms which acknowledge the set of illustrative images as an auxiliary to the act of reading rather than a substitute for it. Linton's claim for illustration as a commentary, or as a set of notes, presents graphic images as readable commentaries that resemble editorial material selected to enable or augment a reader's liberty of

⁴⁸ 'Illustrative Art', Westminster Review (1849), 134-46, in P and V, vol. 8., Tennyson and his Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators (1894).

⁴⁹ P and V, vol. 8, p. 142.

⁵⁰ P and V, vol. 8, p. 134.

interpretation. His idea of illustration thus acknowledged that the illustrator is another reader of the poem with the ability, or privilege, of rendering a personal reading into the form of a visual image, a definition of illustration is concrete, yet sufficiently tolerant of the rightness of an illustration's interpretational element given its secondary position. The illustration is an independent gloss, drawing from one particular reading among other possibilities, as he went on to point out; 'even the best appreciators may be further enlightened by collating their several readings of the text [. . .] wherefore are commentaries and pictorial illustrations. But if the commentator prate of some matter altogether foreign to the play, will we for him be any better learners of the poet's depths?' The task for the illustrator then becomes a balancing act between the autonomy of image which asserts its status as an interpretation while telling us something new about the text in its 'distinctness'. Linton's criticism of modern illustration proceeds from the position that visual images should 'elucidate' poetic meaning, and by means of technical skill, contribute to a reader's understanding.⁵¹ The fact that Linton writes of illustration as commentary shows that he was not aiming towards an ideal reader-text relationship in his images, but directing the reader towards productive interpretational possibilities. In his Bryant editions we therefore find a continuation of Linton's long-term project as an author in his concerns with stimulating active reader participation in the process of encountering literary culture.

These views may seem orthodox or even conventional, but if we attend to the musical-dramatic analogies, illustration as a commentary or a variation, Linton has given us a concept of the illustrator as a performer of verbal meaning in a different form of communication which nevertheless produces a 'poetic creation', rather than an imitator of surface meaning. What Linton's analogies share is a sense of deliberate engagement with the apparent meaning of the text. In his editions Linton works out the

⁵¹ P and V, vol. 8, p. 135.

potentially limiting subjectivity of illustration by opting self-consciously for the emblematicism endorsed by the verbal structures and the themes of Bryant's 'Thanatopsis' and 'The Flood of Years'.

What David Skilton calls emblematic illustration relates differently to a text than a naturalistic image in the sense that the emblem emphasises the symbolic elements of a poem. While the particulars of style were determined by individual artists, there is a representative kind of literary illustration from the 1860s onwards which is perhaps most familiar to a modern readership. The image gives a skilful graphic transcript of a moment from the text. Millais' style in particular encouraged a particular approach by the engraver who often reproduced every stroke of the pen and gave the image a resemblance to a sketch rather than a finished work which demanded the facsimile style of engraving. David Skilton has diagnosed this kind of illustration as indicative of 'an overall movement away from symbolic and what is called "emblematic" illustration between the forties and the sixties'.⁵² Emblematic habits were used on different levels of explicitness by illustrators working within the orthodox naturalistic graphic idiom represented by the graphic style of Millais which Skilton characterises as offering 'the equivalent of the most "neutral" description' of fictional events and characters.⁵³ In his departure from this mode of illustration, Linton's graphic work is additional evidence for Michael Bath's conclusion that emblematic imagery, embedded as a tradition within the craft of wood engraving, retained its power as a way of seeing and as a mode of illustration for Victorian artists. According to Bath, illustrations of the Victorian period 'show how cautious we ought to be before limiting emblematic picturae to any

⁵² 'The Relation Between Illustration and Text in the Victorian Novel: A New Perspective', in Word and Visual Imagination: Studies in the Interaction of English Literature and the Visual Arts, eds. Karl Josef Holtgen, Peter M. Daly and Wolfgang Lottes (Erlangen: Univ. Bibliothek Erlangen, 1988), pp. 303-325, p. 313. Further references will be given as Word and Visual Imagination.

⁵³ Word and Visual Imagination, p. 314.

particular period style'.⁵⁴ Other recent work in this area has stressed the continuity of emblematics on different degrees of self consciousness throughout the Victorian period.⁵⁵ From a literary or interpretational perspective is the most interesting because the peculiar feature of the emblematic illustration is that it encourages an interrelationship or dialogue between text and image. The emblem insists on being read rather than passed over in a casual glance. Linton knew emblem books themselves extremely well, and considered the Hypnerotomachia and Holbein's emblematic Dance of Death as landmark works in the development of engraving and particular instances of the creative effects of the collaboration of wood engraver and artist. In the Masters Linton's terms of praise for the variety and quality of line in the emblem book the Hypnerotomachia portray the engraver as co-author in the production of meaning.

Linton's recognition that the development of wood engraving as a craft was interwoven with the production of emblem books and therefore with patterns of reading was paralleled by Schopenhauer in Die Welt which, as a reader of German idealist philosophy, he may have known.⁵⁶ However, while Schopenhauer was being translated in the 1870s, the first English translation of the whole of Die Welt did not appear until 1883.⁵⁷ Rather than demonstrating a specific influence, the reason for my inclusion of Schopenhauer's discussion of emblems as forms of knowledge is to suggest the proximity of it to Linton's ideas of the formal features of emblematic illustration in relation to poetry. Schopenhauer defined emblems as 'those simple allegorical representations explained by a motto, which are meant to express a moral truth', images that are inimical to aesthetic production because they lead the reader to the conception

⁵⁴ Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture (London: Longmans, 1994), p. 267.

⁵⁵ Word and Visual Imagination.

⁵⁶ Free Public Library of New Haven, to W. J. L., 10 October 1893, acknowledging receipt of his copy of a 'Life of Schopenhauer', Beinecke.

⁵⁷ Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Idea, trans. by R. B. Haldane (London: Kegan Paul, 1883). Further references will be given as Haldane.

rather than perception of an idea. However, in poetry 'the conception is always the given, which it tries to make perceptible by means of a picture', by which Schopenhauer means the images generated by figurative language that lead to the object of perception, 'the representation of which must be undertaken by the imagination of the hearer'.

Graphic or pictorial images may assist the verbal expression of an idea, but 'such a picture will not be regarded as a work of art, but only a significant symbol, and it makes no claim to pictorial, but only to poetical worth'.⁵⁸

This non-representational theory of emblems is both a mode of reading image and text in combination and a way of attributing significance to a reader's participation in the creation of meaning through imaginative engagement with the emblematic verbal image. Linton's idea of the act and quality of illustration as commentary parallels or bears comparison with Schopenhauer's discussion of the function of literary illustration in the context of individual interpretation. In Linton's case the given conception is the poem's vision of the experience of nature which he interpreted through his Wordsworthian model of perception. Linton's interest in idealist philosophy led him to consider the perception of the phenomenal world as contact with Platonic ideas. This comes through in the illustrations for Bryant's poems in their preoccupation with the flux and transience of phenomena which, in recurring patterns, suggest the enduring forms of perception.

On opening Linton's Thanatopsis a reader encounters Linton's adaptation of William Blake's 'Death's Door', one of the twelve illustrations executed by Blake for an 1808 edition of Blair's poem The Grave. In this, and the first textual illustration, the ideas of the poem are encapsulated in figurative elements, an unusual feature in relation to Linton's reliance on landscape in his graphic output (Figs. 26, 27).

⁵⁸ Haldane, p. 309, 312 (Volume I Book 3 para. 50).

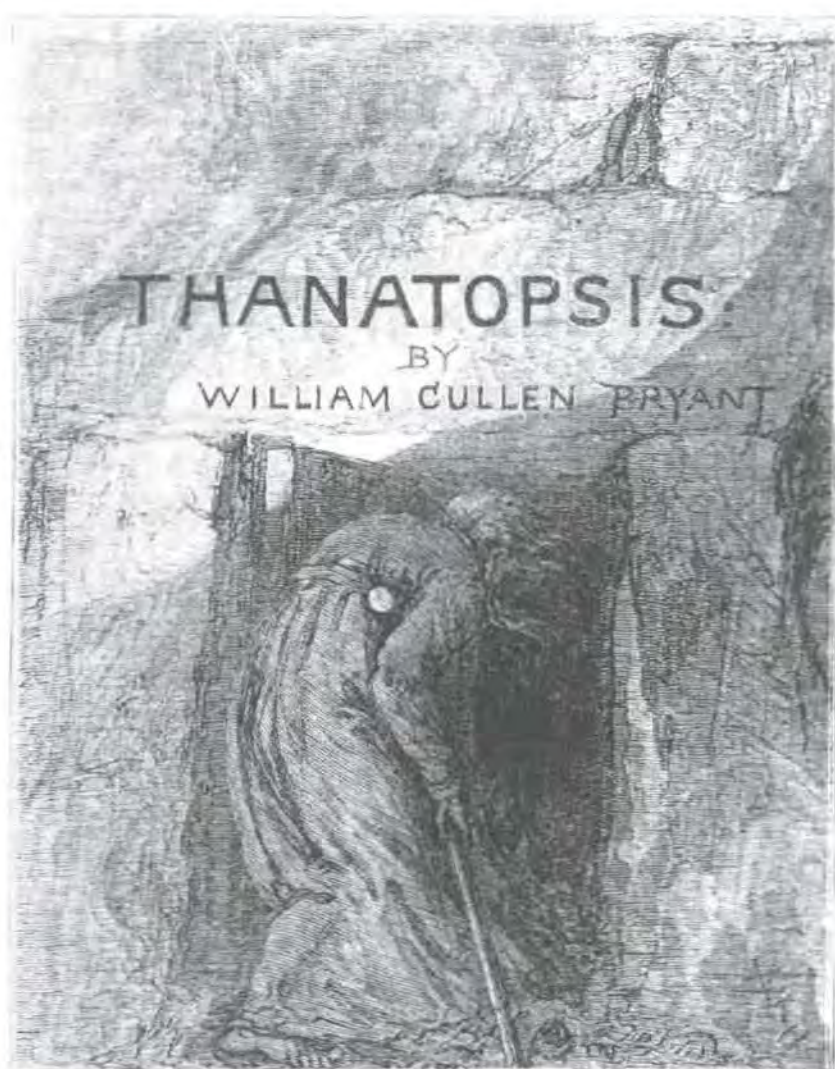


Figure 26. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, title page of Thanatopsis.



Figure 27. W. J. Linton, draughtsman and engraver, 'Death's Door', wood engraving after William Blake, dated 1856.

Rather than an imitation of Blake, the title image plays out the potential for emblematicism which is apparent in the opening of the poem:

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language ('Thanatopsis' ll. 1-3)

The act of meditation within Bryant's poem is conceived of as a visual relationship with the forms of nature. The poem unifies this idea through a compact linear movement which takes the reader through a series of visual analogues for intimations of mortality. The speaker finds concrete signs of death in the natural world which are at once images of mortality and of persistence. Nature's figuration as a set of signs with the capacity to reflect states of mind may be read as a Romantic version of emblematics: the natural world is a reflex of its verbal representation, the persuasive illusion that there is a reciprocal relationship between the figure or conceit and the object it represents, set up by a skilful and seemingly appropriate correspondence between metaphor and idea. The 'various language' of nature is dependent on the observer's colloquy with the natural world, but ultimately the intimation of persistence, which is the core of the poem's statement of stoical consolation, inheres in an act of seeing which is consequently an act of interpretation. Consolation exists in the image-making capacity attendant on the process of reading nature and the poem. The poem sanctions emblematic illustration in its concept of the natural world as a sign system:

Nor in the embrace of ocean shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourish'd thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again;
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix for ever with the elements,
To be a brother to th' insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod ('Thanatopsis', ll. 21-28)

This is a way of seeing that is conveyed through the idea of prosopopeia which moves seamlessly into Bryant's ornamentation analogy, and Linton is sensitive to the verbal and visual implications of this as a determining dynamic in his illustrations.

The hills
 Rock-ribb'd and ancient as the sun, —the vales
 Stretching in pensive quietness between;
 The venerable woods—rivers that move
 In majesty, and the complaining brooks
 That make the meadows green; and pour'd round all,
 Old ocean's grey and melancholy waste, —
 Are but the solemn decorations all
 Of the great tomb of man. (ll. 37-43)

In this mode of seeing the moral dimension of the poem derives from the speaker's reflection on the visual elements of nature rather than working from the specific characteristics of those elements. Within the poem then the speaker is standing to one side of the natural world which subsequently becomes a source of metaphor.

In Linton's title page, the figure we see entering a massive doorway simultaneously crosses the terminator of a curved shadow cast by the edge of a formation behind the viewer. The shape of the shadow heightens our curiosity, and the receptive reader is encouraged to speculate on the nature of the object casting the shadow. The shadow stands in for the form which effectively creates the identity of the image. We might look at this as an indication that the shadow represents analogical vision, stressing that the viewer, like the speaker, understands and communicates through the various language of phenomenal nature. Linton has translated this aspect of the poem's consolatory vision into a kind of graphic preface and a summary of his illustrations. At the visual centre is a set of interlocking triangles. Apart from creating an interplay of linear colour, this convergence of a fundamental architectural and compositional figure reflects the illustrational preoccupations with the poetry's serial

architectural spaces within which the speaker articulates his meditations. The contrast is also a pithy reminder of white line as the architecture for each image. A band of mist follows the shape of the shadow, suggesting that our vision is soon to be obscured, another visual translation of the poem's theme, and a graphic reference to its concerns with finding analogues of mortality and consolation in recurrent natural phenomena. Interestingly, Schopenhauer gave Plato's figure of the cave in book seven of The Republic as an example of emblematic verbal expression, a verbal image that resonates in Linton's title page with its cave and shadow. This allusion to Plato is an instance of how Linton incorporated his high cultural expectations of the reader into his illustrations.

There is another element at play in the fact that the source of Linton's motif was William Blake's 'Death's Door', (Fig. 27). According to Gleckner, Bryant was influenced by Blair when writing the poem in 1817, but concludes that it was unlikely that the American poet knew at that time of the Cromek edition illustrated by Blake. The presence however of Blake in Linton's illustrations requires us to clarify the apparent influence before moving on to a full assessment of the Bryant editions. Linton knew of Blake primarily through his work for the 1863 Gilchrist Blake. It was Linton's custom to become closely involved in the production of a book upon which he was working. Despite his dismissive comments on Blake's prophetic books, later correspondence suggests that he entered into the Gilchrists' enthusiasm for the project.⁵⁹

While he admired Blake's craftsmanship, Linton's view on Blake's poetry was included in his account of an inspection, with Alexander Gilchrist, of Blake's manuscripts in preparation for the 1863 biography. The owner of the manuscripts was John Linnell, of whom Linton wrote 'quaint in speech, with strange utterance of strange opinions, a man who might have admired Blake as much for his literary incoherences as

⁵⁹ Anne Gilchrist, to W. J. L., 11 December 1877, Hay.

for his artistic imagination'.⁶⁰ Linton thought differently of Blake's designs: 'Great as Blake was for his power as a designer, he had not been less than an Artist had he been only an engraver'.⁶¹ This praise was rooted in Linton's partisan support of the engraving tradition in which Blake figured as an independent engraver-draughtsman. Apart from the anecdote about Linnell, Linton made no other recorded references to Blake's poetry or radicalism, but this apparent antipathy to Blake's writing is partially explained by Linton's notion of literary propriety in conflict with Blake's mythology. It must be added however that Linton's propensity for form enabled a great deal of interesting writing, but his strongly-held views on poetic form was obviously a blind spot: it led to his appraisal of Whitman as 'a true poet who could not write poetry, much of wilfulness accounting for his neglect of form, perhaps as fatal a mistake in a poet as in a painter'.⁶² Much evidence has been lost however. The card catalogue of the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University contains an entry describing a folder of studies by Linton after Blake, but the material is untraceable, possibly missing.

The dedication in Linton's Thanatopsis suggests other, less well-known inspirations for his Bryant illustrations: 'Acknowledged to David Scott and William Blake and (almost unknown as an artist) Isaac Taylor'. Linton's knowledge of and views on Blake's work may have been mediated through his life long relationship with the Scottish painters David and William Bell Scott. Their father, Robert Scott, had been a subscriber to Cromek's The Grave, which David Scott owned and annotated.⁶³ William Bell Scott later produced a book of etchings from Blake's designs and wrote the introduction to the ground-breaking exhibition in the 1870s which Horne referred to

⁶⁰ Memories, p. 182.

⁶¹ 'The Engraver: his Function and Status' Scribner's Monthly 16 (June 1878), 237-242.

⁶² Memories, p. 218.

⁶³ Kerrison Preston, Blake and Rossetti (London: Alexander Moring, 1944), pp. 100-101.

in one of his letters to Linton.⁶⁴ In Linton's writing Blake is always referred to in connection with David, suggesting this contact was the source of his later reflections on Blake. Linton's personal closeness to the Scott family certainly involved artistic discussions, and he admired David Scott's style which, as Kerrison Preston argued in 1944, was an early instance of Blake's influence. Another interesting, but inconclusive, link is that Robert Essick notes an untraced Blake drawing of 'Death's Door' recorded in the Sotheby's 1885 sale of William Bell Scott's possessions to Linton's publisher B. F. Stevens, possibly one of the drawings subsequently assumed as lost.⁶⁵ This was possibly one of the drawings that Schiavonetti used in his engraving of Blake's inventions, and Linton therefore might have known the image in its original form. David Bindman argues that the unique white line engraving Blake executed for Cromek's 1805 advertisement for The Grave shows the 'uncompromising vigour' of Blake's initial thoughts on the designs for the book.⁶⁶ The image has also been described as the 'intended pattern' for the style of the illustrations before Schiavonetti engraved his more acceptable versions, although recent scholarship may modify this view.⁶⁷ Whether Linton knew of the Blake original or not, he brought to the motif an emotional sensitivity through his expressive white line, showing that his response to Blake is consonant with the independence of thought and idiosyncrasy of his work as a whole rather than an act of simplistic imitation. However the motif was developed by Linton, the peculiar, probably accidental, effect is that his image returns to the original

⁶⁴ William Bell Scott, William Blake: Etchings from his Works (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878), 'Introductory Remarks' for the Burlington Fine Arts Club Exhibition of the Works of William Blake (London: Spottiswoode, 1876). R. H. Horne, to W. J. L., 10 June 1876, Beinecke.

⁶⁵ Robert N. Essick, The Separate Plates of William Blake: A Catalogue (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 49-51. G. E. Bentley Jr., The Stranger from Paradise: A Biography of William Blake (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2001).

⁶⁶ David Bindman, The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 19 and Plate 408.

⁶⁷ Robert N. Essick and Morton D. Paley, Robert Blair's The Grave Illustrated by William Blake: A Study With Facts (London: Scolar press, 1982), pp. 68-69. Martin Butlin, 'New Risen from the Grave: Nineteen Unknown Watercolours by William Blake', Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, 35 (Winter 2002), 68-73.

spirit of Blake's concept for The Grave. The qualities of Linton's image show how his response to Blake was characteristically idiosyncratic and thoughtful. As for Bryant's part in Linton's choices for the images he created for the poem, the available evidence, as Gleckner has pointed out, makes it difficult to judge how much influence he might have had on the creative process.

The form of the illustrations in Linton's Thanatopsis varies: whole page illustrations alternate with images combined with text. The whole page images align particular lines from the poem with moments from biblical narrative and are conceived of in terms of visually layered topography or architecture. The textual images are more directly related to the poem, having the feeling of 'decorative' inscriptions, linking into the poem's suggestion that perceptual phenomena may be figured in these terms (Fig. 28). The first vignette in the book (Fig. 29) has two allegorical figures against a sky, the drawing is anatomically expressive, and in its pairing of youth and age produces the most obviously Blakean image, but in the rest of the illustrations the landscape bears the expressive burden, such as the landscape of 'Under the Open Sky' in which Linton exposes the underlying geological structure of the landscape to illustrate Bryant's idea of nature's universal 'various language', but his free handling of the tool in conveying the interpenetration of earth and air animates the natural forms in curves and irregular masses of white line (Fig. 30). As well as recalling his blocks of Blake's Job for the Gilchrist Life, the landscape of 'The Shadow of Death' shows Linton's reflections on his engravings of Thomas Moran's Grand Canyon paintings, visualising death as a monumental figure embracing the canyon-like formations (Fig. 31).

The two biblical images 'Exodus' and 'Expulsion' realise Linton's idea of illustration as commentary and cross-reference (Figs. 32, 33). In the 'Expulsion' the composition is cramped by masses of vegetation delineated in white line. The interplay of open spaces and confinement in the image reinforces the cultural resonance of the



His favorite phantom - yet all these shall leave
 Their mirth and their enjoyment, and shall come
 And make their bed with thee. As thousand train
 Of ages glide away, the sons of men

The youth in life's first spring, and he who grows
 In the full armor of manhood's might and pride,
 The simple swain, and the wild boar-hunters
 Shall one by one be gathered to thy side;

By those who were thy playmates, and by those
 Whom thou hast loved, and those who love thee still;
 The humble and the haughty, and the poor,
 The rich, the great, the low, the high, the free,
 The lowly and the high, the rich and poor,
 The humble and the haughty, and the poor,



Figure 28. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from *Thanatopsis*.



THANATOPSIS.

TO HIM who in the love of nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she
speaks

A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts

Figure 29. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from Thanatopsis.



Under the open sky.

Figure 30. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from Thanatopsis.



The Shadow of Death

Figure 31. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, 'The Shadow of Death' page from Thanatopsis.



Figure 32. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, "The dead reign there" page from *Thanatopsis*.



Figure 33. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, "Unto dust shalt thou return" page from Thanatopsis.

expulsion from Eden in the Miltonic tradition where the Edenic landscape was the site of ideals, aspirations, and failure. Specific chapter and verse are printed with the engraving, but the image relates to broader concepts such as the mythical inception of mortality. 'Exodus', Linton's illustration for 'the dead reign there', contains a similar sense of cultural echoes. In 'Thanatopsis' the earth is literally and figuratively the resting place of all social orders, literally because burial is a culturally universal act, and figuratively because the earth becomes a tomb decorated by signs of mortality. Linton's illustration for these lines elucidates the layering of the poem which the speaker has displaced into the landscape. Linton's illustrations ask the reader to collate the cultural antecedents of Bryant's images; they are a kind of commentary. The illustrated edition thus becomes another layer in the act of reading and interpretation, like an annotated text in which the biblical parallel in each image adds to the layering.

If Linton's Thanatopsis brings out the emblematic characteristics of the poem then the illustrations for Linton's 1877 edition of 'The Flood of Years' opens up further the poetic status, in Schopenhauer's sense, of the image inhabiting the frame. There is no reference to this edition in any of the standard reference books on Bryant, but Linton's seems to have been one of the first published versions of this poem written in 1876. The Flood of Years has the feeling of a collaborative production. This may have been the case: the book marked personal factors in convergence, Linton's fiftieth year as a professional engraver, and Bryant's last poem. A later edition of the illustrated texts nods towards this. In many ways the publication resembles, in method and design, a true emblem book in the sense that the writer and the illustrator-engraver worked to interweave their shared programme. Indeed, Linton considered 'The Flood of Years' to be 'a poor poem', and his comments to his son suggest that he thought, with some justification, that his illustrations could not only aid the book's reception in enriching

the text, but that they would add to the poem.⁶⁸ Linton began work in May. By late August the engraving of the Flood images was complete and the blocks sent to the printer.⁶⁹ At the end of August he wrote a blank verse commentary explaining his creative choices in illustrating the poem, and this he later printed with the images as Illustrations to The Flood of Years- Drawn and engraved by W. J. Linton: with the artist's interpretation of his own designs, which, despite its title, is more than a set of notes to himself. The draft of the poem has the note 'written in three hours August 29th 1877', showing that it was a sketch written spontaneously as a response to his own work filtered through the vision of Bryant's poem.⁷⁰ The Interpretation forms an unusual commentary by an engraver on the relationship between craft, text and reader, in which Linton exploits the discursive flexibility of the five stress line to give an account of what he understood as interpretation.

He was pleased with the engravings, and as a further act of self-publicity he arranged for an exhibition of them at the Century.⁷¹ Publication of the book was delayed by a drought in October, but by November it was reviewed in the New York Evening Post.⁷² The review, which appreciated Linton's approach to the poem, shows how his illustrative strategy not only enlivened the poem for its American audience, but also succeeded in placing his abilities in the foreground. For the reviewer, the book was 'a bold attempt certainly thus to translate a poem of such unity of idea into the rigid language of graphic art [. . .] which proves the artist to be himself a poet, as the making of poetic translations from one language to another does'. It also identified the difficulty of compressing static images into narrative moments is resolved in the nature of the poem, being a sequence of analogues, each a distinct picturae: 'The difficulty

⁶⁸ W. J. L., to Willie, 6 June 1877, Feltrinelli 1/20

⁶⁹ W. J. L., to Willie, 21 August 1877, Feltrinelli 1/20

⁷⁰ Printed in 1884 according to Parkes Biography. Further references will be given as Interpretation, draft ms, Beinecke.

⁷¹ W. J. L., to Willie, 7 November 1877, Feltrinelli Folder 1/20

⁷² 22 November 1877, cutting, Feltrinelli.

which the artist encountered at the outset was the necessity of presenting the idea of the “never-ending flood of years” [. . .] The conception which perfectly fitted the poet’s purpose lent itself far less readily to the artist’s methods. Mr. Linton has happily solved the problem by showing each imagined scene in company with a strong picture of the obliterating flood, sometimes merely as a flood, sometimes bearing on its bosom traces of the things it has swept away, vague traces suggesting half-effaced memories’.

‘The Flood of Years’ as a poem and in Linton’s illustrated version is even more powerfully emblematic than ‘Thanatopsis’ in that it offers distinct concrete images of mortality. The poetic speaker’s meditations develop from a unified analogy which visualises time as a fluid sequence of transformational deluges. Each analogy in this sequence concentrates on the concrete perceptual attributes of a particular space, which in turn becomes a distinct representative image almost standing beside the poem as an amplification of the stated meaning. The emblematic quality of these images is reinforced by Bryant’s pictorial mode of presentation, a quality that interested contemporary American painters. The poem’s subjects of fluidity, change, alteration, loss, and reclamation through interpretation are conceived of in spatial terms where landscape is emblematic of metaphysical ideas.

Linton’s illustrations double the relationship between poetic meaning and emblem by exploiting the emblematic potential of the wood engraved image. Traditionally, the emblem is an integral part of the reading experience, but rather than simply elicit the emblematic aspect of Bryant’s poem, Linton engages the reader in a reflective return to the text. Linton had indicated in an 1849 article that if an image has value beyond decoration it is to send the reader back to the poem. In his own illustrations he achieves this through the qualities of his engraving, in his use of line, compositional elements, and the dynamic of double reading.

The curve is an underpinning compositional element across the illustrations, and is an instance of how Linton designed his images to reflect the thematic movement of the poem, thus bringing the illustrations into close alignment with the poem's verbal structure. In the image for Bryant's image of the after life 'Further on / A belt of darkness seems to bar the way, / Long, low and distant, where the life that Is / Touches the Life to Come', the curves in the composition arrest the reading process by encouraging a further contemplation of the function of the curve as a figure within the poem (Fig. 34). As a visual device the curve takes place over space and time, it is an extended figure which promotes an extended process of looking. In addition to this thematic association the dynamic of correspondence as a form of reinforcing and conveying meaning remind us that the curve had significance beyond the decorative in Victorian aesthetics, particularly in Ruskin's comments on line, which Linton refers to in the Masters: 'The whole art of engraving consists in the expression, by black or white lines, of form, texture, and colour. For the line which is to represent form we perceive an absolute law, a law proclaimed in the flowing line of cloud or wave, convex or concave: its highest potentiality of beauty exemplified in the mountain curve, that continual departure from the finite circle (as told us by Ruskin) [. . .] I imagine that the law of line for an engraver, consciously or unconsciously, is based on this'.⁷³ The curve therefore represents the modern draughtsman's apprehension of the roots of his craft in the processes and forms of the natural world, and relates to a Ruskinian understanding that tastes have their origins in natural formations. Another element at play here is the sense of emptiness that Linton conveys through his use of white line. The curves in his images occupy vast empty spaces, such as the imagery of sea and sky that may have been influenced by his admiration of Japanese wood block prints (Fig. 35).⁷⁴ Variations

⁷³ Masters, p. 199.

⁷⁴ Rossetti Papers, p. 240, Raphael Pumpelly, to W. J. L., 24 April 1871, Beinecke.



Figure 34. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, 'band of darkness' page from The Flood of Years.

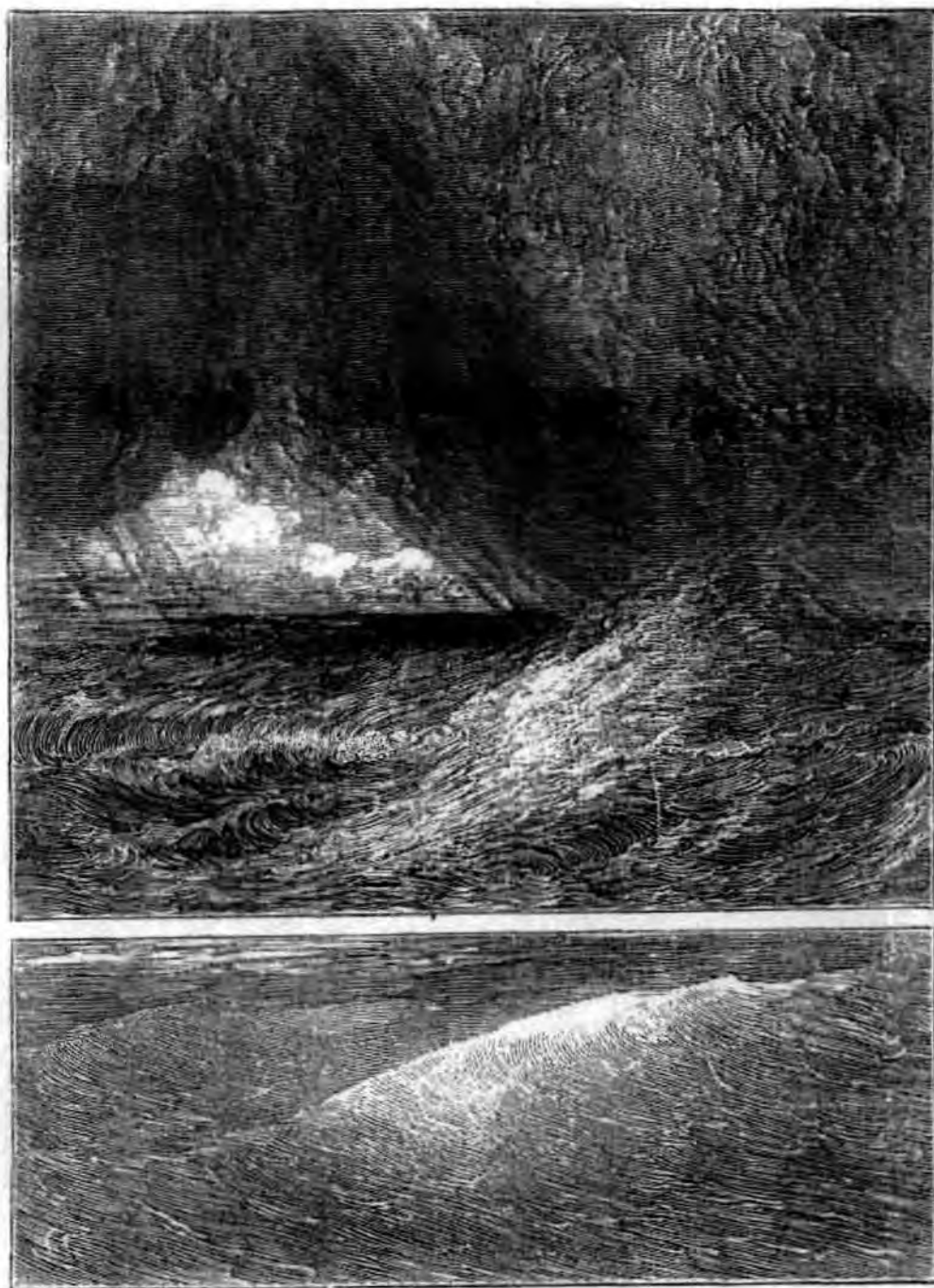


Figure 35. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from The Flood of Years.

on the form of the curve recur through the Interpretation, a point that Linton brings out in relation to his image for Bryant's 'they who toil/ And they who strive' (Fig. 36):

Giving beneath as comment, pictured note,
A scene of devastation, hinting how
Despite all human care the course of years
Lays all things waste, and how re-echoing Time
Repeats the efforts of the world's first youth,
Returning on itself with the snake-coil. (ll. 18-23)

Time as a coil suggests the unifying motif of the curve and is an instance of Linton employed his compositional elements to echo or correspond with verbal meaning.

The technique of double reading involves a sense of possibility: the reader's first response is that the a new form has been found, which is followed by an awareness that the image could be read in several different ways. Linton was employing this device playfully in his 1874 illustrations for the Jane G. Austin's children's book Moonfolk, where this aspect of his style in the Bryant illustrations is writ large (Fig. 37). The Moonfolk illustrations require attentiveness from a reader, particularly the delicate cover image, which exploits the double readings that encourage active participation by young readers. This approach contains the implicit suggestion that children are also imaginative and sophisticated readers.

The Flood illustrations introduce the double reading idea in the title page with its suggestion of tombstones in the clouds (Fig. 38), but in the illustration intended to parallel Bryant's 'belt of darkness' image (Fig. 34) the double readings highlight the transformations described in the poem, and simultaneously reinforce the self-enclosed integrity of the poem's analogy by introducing the element of uncertainty involved in the act of reading the double meanings. The Flood illustrations enact Linton's idea of illustration: reading the double image is an act of looking that involves finding what is



For sturdy kind—woodmen—are there.



Figure 36. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from The Flood of Years.



Figure 37. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, title page from Jane G. Austin, Moonfolk (1874).

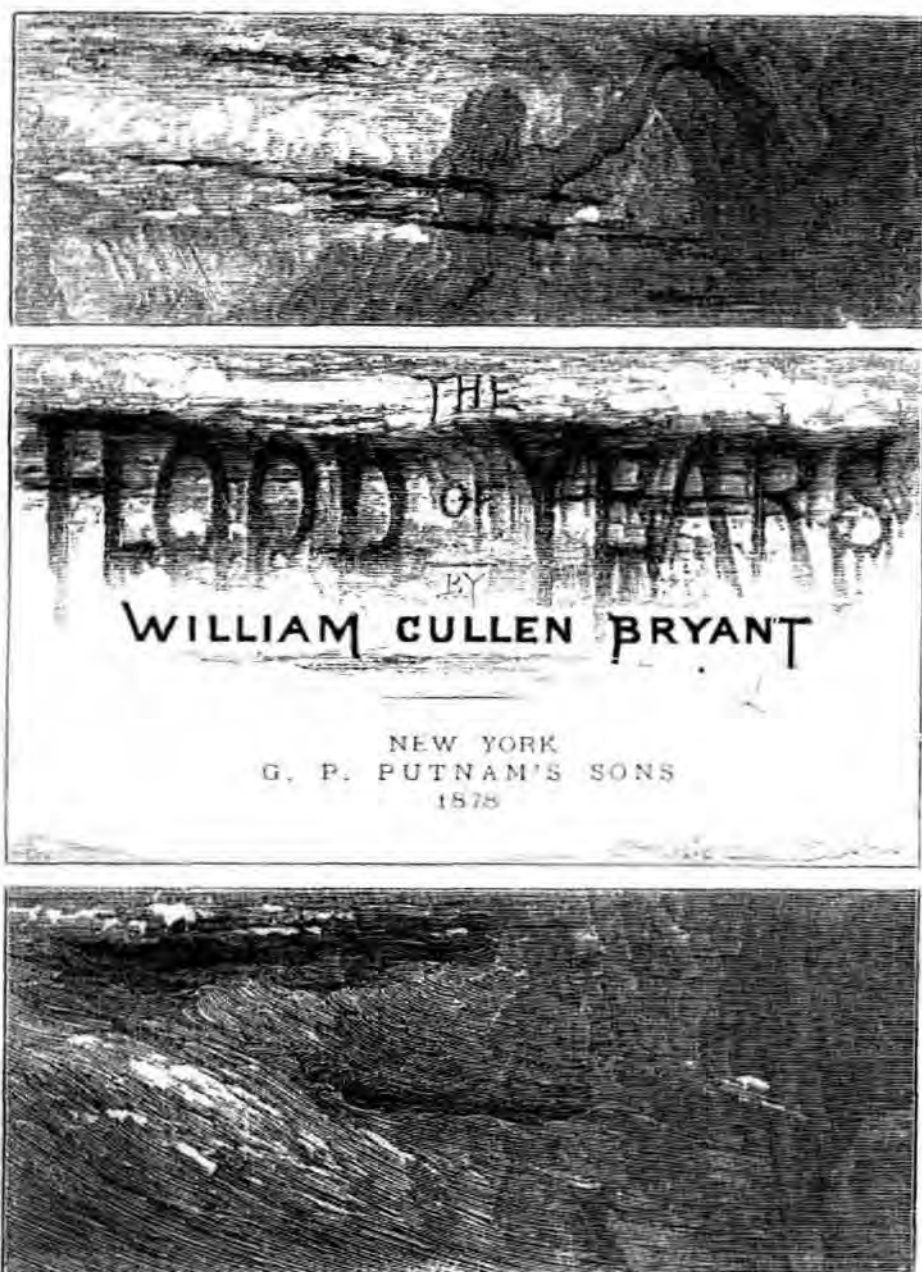


Figure 38. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, title page of The Flood of Years.

already there, the arrival at which opens up further interpretation, and sends the reader back to the poem for confirmation, thus encouraging the reader to move between image and text. There is also the sense of realisation that comes in discovering the hidden form, a discovery confirmed by a return to the text. Apart from gratifying the reader's sense of collaboration the double reading serves a further function which brings us closer to the moral of the text. The image is therefore encouraging an active reader participation which is perhaps Linton's criticism of the limited demands placed upon the reader by a hard-edged style of graphic illustration.

The effect of the double reading in the Flood images is to provoke a reader's attempt to find and stabilise forms within the configuration of lines. Linton's use of indeterminate elements in the landscape compels further looking and therefore keeps the images alive, a process in which double reading retains its vivid power to hold the eye while compelling the reader towards predetermined meanings. The peculiarly tactile technique of horizontal lines varying in thickness and quality that build up the image results in a shimmering effect which resembles a Bridget Riley painting (Fig. 34). The effect, not readily reproduced, works with the meaning of Bryant's verbal image in realising the poem's themes of mortality as instability and flux.

Linton's meditative visionary landscape and double readings match and create a set of variations on Bryant's poem: the images encourage a contemplative reading of a truth in the poem. A further layer in this relationship of poem-reader-illustrator is Linton's Interpretation, written while he was producing the illustrations. The printed version of the poem forms an unusual commentary on the relationship between craft, text and reader, in which Linton exploits the discursive flexibility of the five stress line to give an account of what he understands as interpretation. In the tone of the Interpretation one feels that he knew that the illustrations were good work, and in writing a poem about them he is reinforcing or arguing for the visual images as poetic

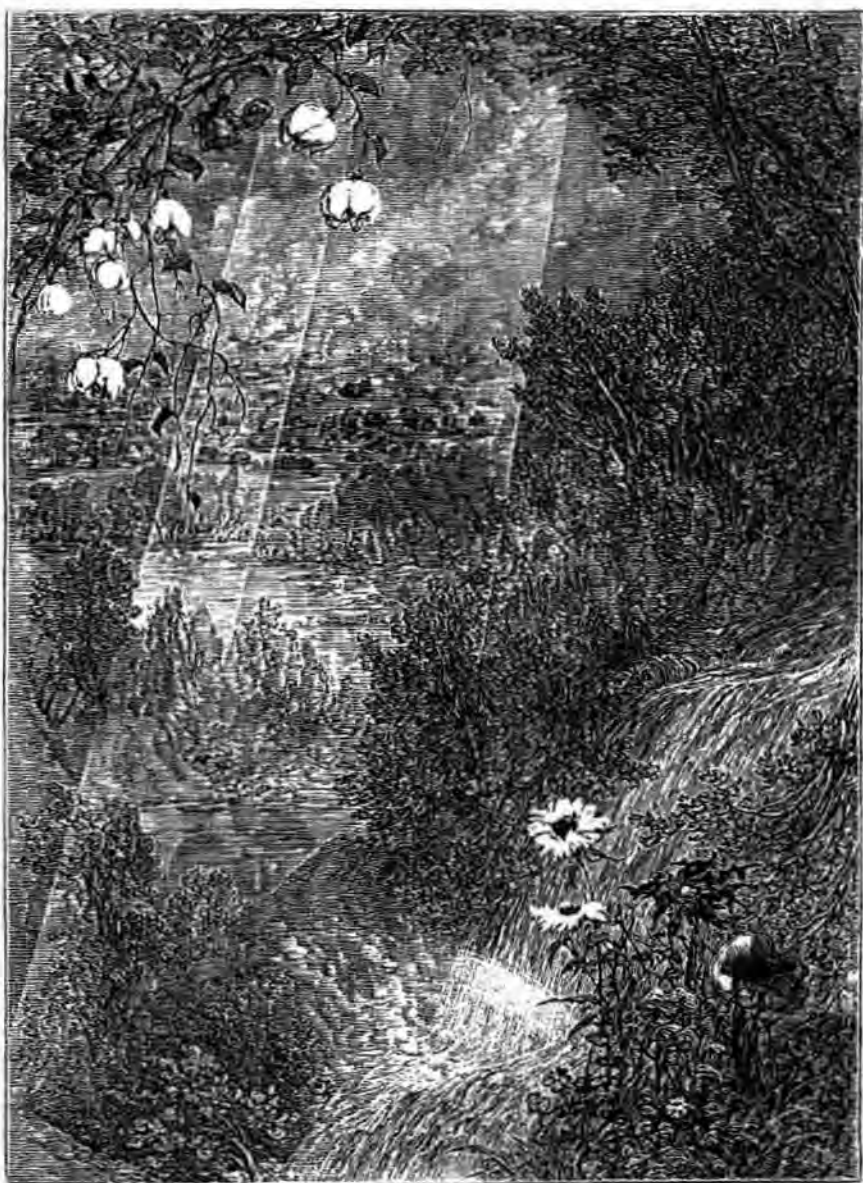


Figure 39. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from The Flood of Years.



Figure 40. W. J. Linton, artist and engraver, page from The Flood of Years.

Through its rhetorical enquiry, the poem presents the reader with alternatives which raise further questions concerning the validity of the analogical procedure in relation to the validity of the emblematic imagery. This idea of emblems moves us into the possible resolution to this crisis of representation:

Dreams of poetic heaven, yet still of earth:
We can not fashion but of the elements
Around us, and our heaven is always earth,-
With some improvements haply on God's plan,
So clever are we in our self-conceit. (ll. 230-234)

The image of an idyllic landscape and the related image of heaven (Figs. 39, 40) enact a lapse in the compromise in the rest of the poem between the synchronic quality of the verbal emblems and the diachronic dynamic of the flood. This moment is acknowledged in the Interpretation. Rather than being a simplistic surrender to conventional imagery, the image of heaven insists on being read as an opportunity to indicate the boundaries of an illustrator's extradiegetic commentary.

The conclusion is tellingly ambiguous in sending us to the illustrations to 'read' the meaning of the poem:

Thus have I endeavour'd to set forth
The Course of Time, in-if not Bryant's words,
Perhaps not unfit echo of his thought,
And if my pencil better than my pen
Have told the story, you can put aside
The iteration of this written sketch,
And read the poem in the engraver's lines. (ll. 264-70)

This conclusion raises the question of whether we are reading Bryant's poem in the images, or the poetry of the imagery, and suggests that the illustrations are a gesture of creative independence. Linton was making a further assertion, that the images were a personal response separate from the text in the sense that a reader might encounter the

images as self-enclosed or valid in their own right. If we accept that this is one of Linton's meanings in his commentary, the Bryant poem becomes a stimulus to graphic production as poetic creation. Linton's pencil corrections to the conclusion emphasise these points. Linton had altered his first draft version of the final lines, which initially read:

And if my pencil better than my pen
Have told the story, you can put aside
The repetition of the written words,
And read the poem from the artist's lines.⁷⁵

It seems that by returning to emblems as a form of textual elaboration, Linton is implicitly commenting on the facsimile or photographically reproduced images prevalent in 1870s illustration on both sides of the Atlantic, particularly the American New School. This relied on photography and photographic modes of seeing in its execution and its effect. This was a double sin for Linton; firstly, because the draughtsmanship of engraving is eroded; secondly, the mode of interpretation is rendered easy. Even a superficial contact with Linton's output shows it to be an account of artisan culture in active rejection of the concept a lowest common denominator in the expectations of a readership. Characteristically then, Linton's images are erudite and idiosyncratic, but they require interpretation rather than the casual glance. This being the case, the illustrations of Bryant are an example of Linton using his creativity as a form of critical activity.

Some of the preparatory drawings for both books survive (Fig. 41).⁷⁶ They are lightly executed free sketches, and resemble his drawings for the engravings in the Lake Country, Moonfolk and the images for children's books that Linton drew and engraved at regular intervals in his output. The liveliness of the sketches and their rapidity of execution may represent Linton's initial thoughts rather than being the detailed and

⁷⁵ Ms, Beinecke.

⁷⁶ Beinecke.

exact drawings he used as guides for the engravings. It is equally possible that the sketches were rough guides for the engravings, and that the actual drawing of the images was carried out with the engraving tool in the manner Linton advocated throughout his writings on the craft. In which case the Bryant books were Linton's practical demonstration of his thoughts about engraving as a creative form. A further layer to this creative process is the fact that Linton had arranged the sketches for The Flood of Years with the text of the poem as a printer's guide, showing the high degree of control he was given over the design of the final book (Fig. 42).⁷⁷ The publisher's confidence was well-placed, as Linton's books continue to lend a freshness to Bryant's poems for the few modern readers who have sought to view them.⁷⁸

Linton's illustrations seem to forestall reader's criticism by being so close to the text's analogical structure in bringing out the ideas of space in the poem. Linton found in Bryant's poetic vision a vehicle for his graphic style which is also singularly appropriate for illustrating the poems. The visual imagery of the book remained Linton's own in its treatment of poetic meaning. The quality of line, double reading, and the absorption of the figurative elements into the landscape show an affinity with rather than an influence from Bryant. In addition, Linton's advantage in his editions was the unity which derived from complete creative control over the illustrations and typography. The true significance therefore of the publications lies in the fact that Linton was an engraver with a literary sensibility and an artistic hand, skilled in the wood engraving craft, who, by this fortuitous combination, brought to the illustration of Bryant a graphic style peculiarly sympathetic with the poetry and which continue to engage readers. If we allow a biographical analogy, the images are in themselves emblems of Linton's creative and literary achievement; small scale, self-contained, and a synthesis of intelligent technique with an almost child-like mode of seeing.

⁷⁷ The Flood of Years printer's dummy, Beinecke.

⁷⁸ Gleckner, Radical Artisan, p. 190, Phelps, 261.

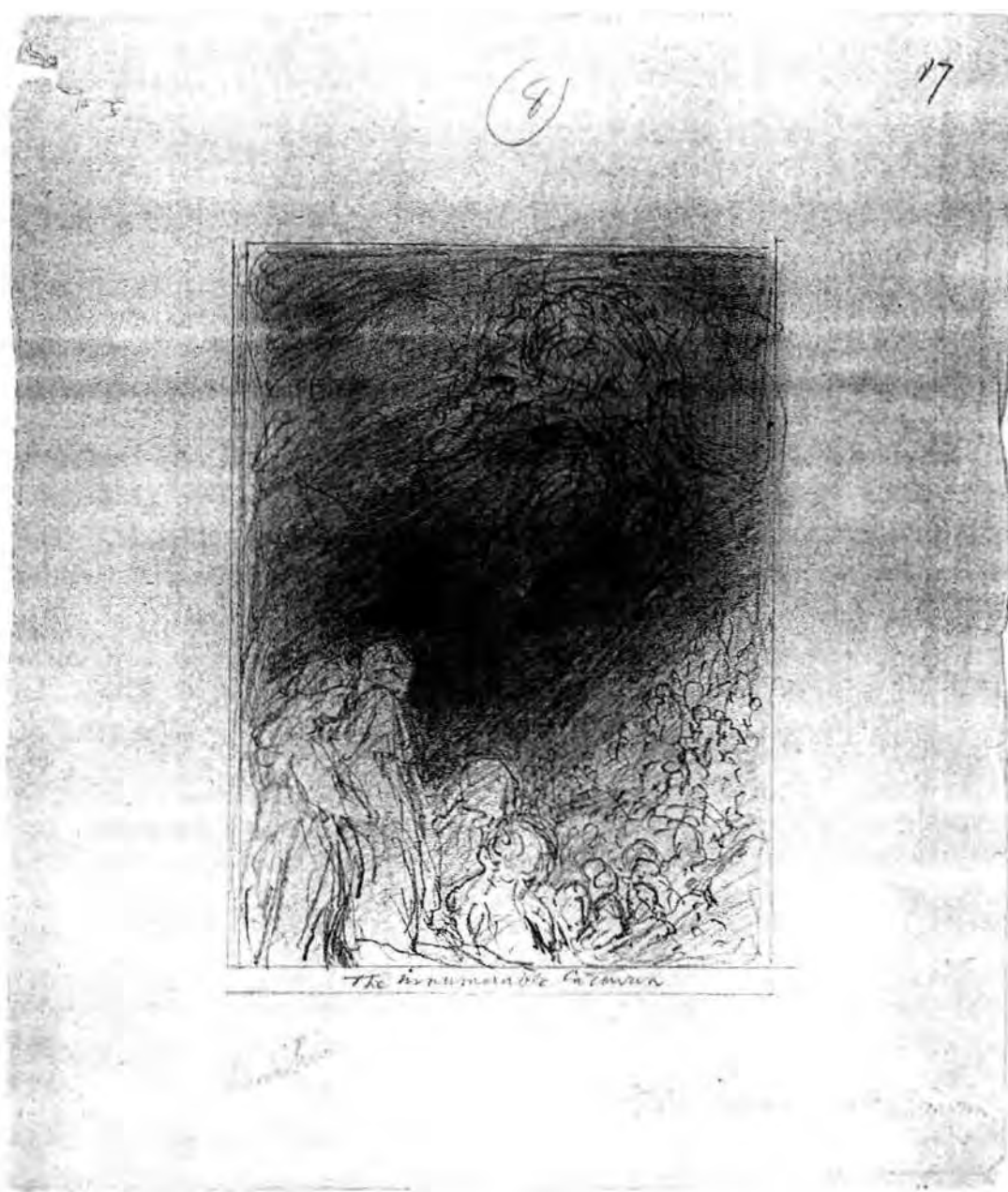


Figure 41. W. J. Linton, artist, study for Thanatopsis illustration 'The Shadow of Death', pencil .

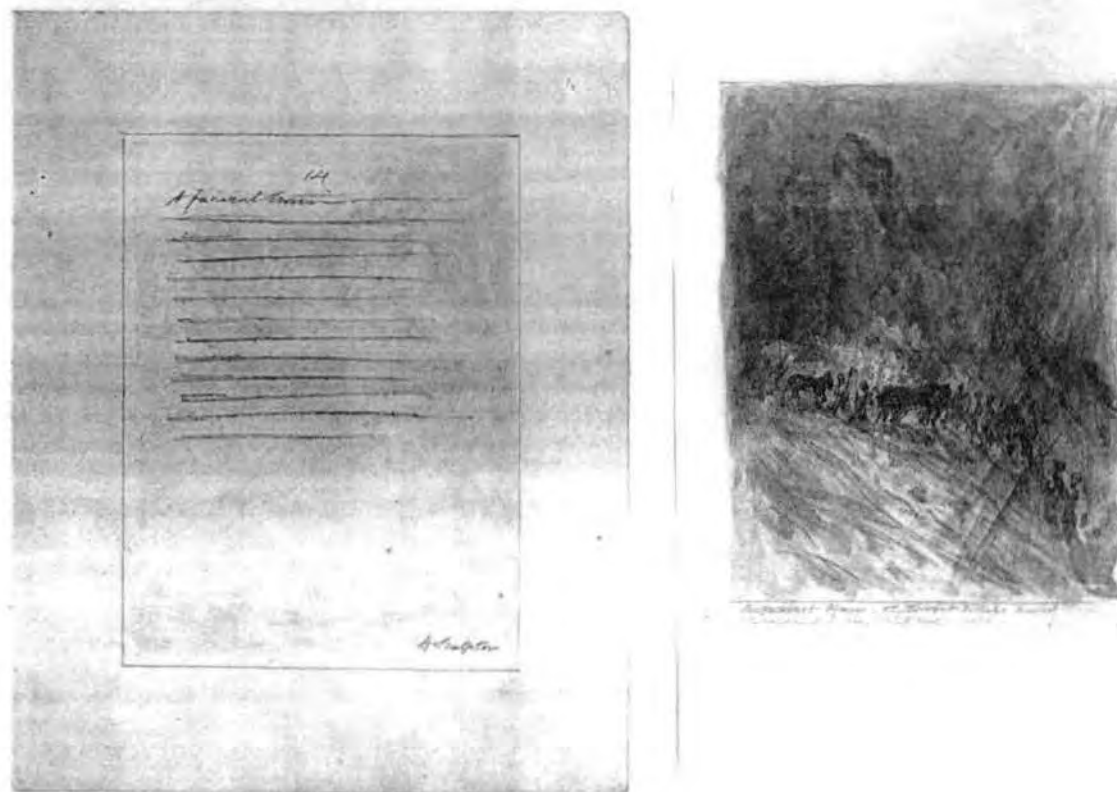


Figure 42. W. J. Linton, artist, pages from the printer's dummy of The Flood of Years, pencil and watercolour.

The question of why Linton had not produced anything like the Bryant editions previously is partly explained by the sheer volume of reproductive work he had to produce simply to maintain his reputation, and, with an extensive family to support, to keep out of debt, and his earlier emphasis on politics absorbed so much of his time through the 1840s and 1850s. Furthermore, as previous chapters have shown, Linton's ideas of creativity were conditioned by the contribution that verbal expression could make to public discourse, a dynamic that affected the value he placed on his personal perceptions. On the evidence of Linton's editions of Bryant, the lack of similar work by him before or after the mid 1870s can only be considered as a loss to the corpus of nineteenth-century illustrated poetry.

Linton's work in the late 1870s and 1880s divides into books about wood engraving, editorial projects and anthologies of his own verse. His activities were channelled into constructing the sense of individual fulfilment that he had imagined as integral to life in a republican community in the ER: rather than writing about individual fulfilment he started to live it. From the late 1870s Linton's writing clusters around two principal themes: parody, and recollection of the past as a form of self-expression. The increasing playfulness of Linton's verse and his tendency for invented polyphony is apparent in one of the first Appledore Press books, Windfalls (1879). Under the guise of quotations from speeches in imaginary plays, the collection form was a barely concealed screen for Linton to present his views on culture, which are distributed across the invented dramatic extracts. Like many of Linton's other verse sequences, such as In Dispraise of Woman: Catullus with Variations (1886), Windfalls demands to be read as a whole in order that a reader might appreciate the effect of the alternating moods created by the variety of subjects in the speeches, a device which playfully deflects from his authorship of them. In Windfalls Linton also explored his awareness of his qualities as a poet, particularly negative capability, which he knew was

lacking in his work despite his efforts to create a sense of different perspectives by adopting adversarial stances. However, his strength for compact expression is given a new and playful expression in the form of the quotable dramatic extract:

The artist, as the poet, worth the name,
Is never at a loss for choice of theme;
His difficulty lies in rendering ('Art for Art's Sake' ll. 8-10)

Linton thus outlined his authorial ideal in terms of objectivity, but in practice he was closer to the figure of the author in 'A Dramatist':

Novelists today,
Who should be dramatists, more marionettes,
And talk or squeak for them behind the screen. (ll. 13-15)

Nevertheless, Windfalls is relevant to the theme of creative aspiration in what it reveals about Linton's preoccupations in the 1870s and his awareness of how his writing fell short of the ideals against which he measured himself.

Two books published in 1882, Rare Poems of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and The Golden Apples of Hesperus: Poems not in the Collections represent Linton's continued attempt to differentiate his own editorial productions from existing anthologies by including poems by obscure authors, or the obscurer poems by well-known writers, a field that he presented as extensive and unexplored.⁷⁹ Both books were part of his desire for recognition: 'I shall begin to get a wider reception if my Rare

⁷⁹ Rare Poems (Boston: Roberts Brothers 1882, Second Edition Kegan Paul, Trench 1883), Golden Apples of Hesperus (Hamden: APP, 1882). Further references will be given as Rare Poems and Golden Apples.

Poems come out', although he admitted caution about success: 'I am not very sanguine about pecuniary results, but I think the book will give me a literary reputation'.⁸⁰

Rare Poems was intended for the 'general reader', but Linton still applied his customary integrity in establishing accurate and stable copy texts of the rarely printed poems, modestly claiming that 'toward a correcter text I have done all an unlearned man is able to do'.⁸¹ Linton was attracted to the anonymity of the songs from the period, particularly those in Davison's Poetical Rhapsody. A poem that seems to have influenced Linton's later creativity is 'The Tomb of Dead Desire' from the Rhapsody, which combines the authority of universal themes with the self-containment of emblematic form. The mantle of anonymity was Linton's means of emphasising the content of the poems, but this is at odds with the personal nature of his themes. Indeed, he was to take on the identity of one of the anonymous writers in the Rhapsody, 'A. W.', as the pretext for Heart-Easings, a set of verse imitations through which he constructed a relationship with his own past. Lovelace's 'Grasshopper' was another verbal ideal for Linton because of its formal self-containment.

Linton's combined desire for appreciation and his mission to support the cause of neglected modern and Elizabethan writers linked Rare Poems to Golden Apples in purpose. The letter press of the book had been set up since 1877, but it is an indication of how much work intervened that Linton could not proceed with the printing until 1881. It was finished in January 1882 but, with some manual assistance, he had rarely worked less than twelve hours a day since November 1881.⁸² The book was available through Scribner's office in New York, and by June 1884 they had sold out. Despite its academic bias, Linton's fastidious attention to textual accuracy was recognised by the mainstream press as a contribution to a wider reception of the poetry. Cosmo

⁸⁰ W. J. L., to Willie, 13 June 1882, Feltrinelli 1/22. W. J. L., to Willie, 18 July 1882, Feltrinelli 1/22.

⁸¹ Rare Poems, p.6.

⁸² W. J. L., to Willie, 28 February 1882, Feltrinelli 1/22.

Monkhouse wrote of Linton's condensation of rarely or never reprinted poems from the period 'as fresh to most readers as Mr. Swinburne's new volume', and the heritage of Elizabethan poetry as 'the common property of all Englishmen which it is sheer wrong to hide where none but a few can enjoy them'.⁸³ Other reviews admired Linton's return to original texts and inclusion of 'forgotten poets' like John Hall and the 'acute and original' notes.⁸⁴ The craft of the book was also a subject for attention.⁸⁵ A sample of a pages from Golden Apples gives some idea of the extent of Linton's autodidactic achievement in the field of printing, showing the clarity of an Appledore Press page in the close attention to textual placement and format (Figs. 43, 44).

The sequence of anthologies for the large scale market was continued in 1883 with Linton and Stoddard's English Verse.⁸⁶ Linton started exchanging ideas with Stoddard about the shape of the anthology and what model of literary history they would use. Through 1883 Linton was writing to various living poets to secure permission to reprint poems. From the beginning of the project Linton was fastidious with his researches in establishing accurate and reliable texts and information, particularly in relation to ballad literature, 'I will not consent to any interference with the integrity of my text'.⁸⁷ This emphasis on the texts is further shown in Linton's stand against detailed biographies: 'every line of memoir takes the place of poetry'.⁸⁸ By Spring 1883 the copy text of volumes one and two were sent to the publishers.⁸⁹ The anthology irritated the reviewer in the Times, who was baffled by the high proportion of

⁸³ Academy, 26 May 1883, cutting in Feltrinelli.

⁸⁴ New York Mail, 8 November 1882, cutting in Feltrinelli.

⁸⁵ Century Magazine, September 1882, cutting in Feltrinelli.

⁸⁶ English Verse (New York: Scribner's, 1884), 5 vols.

⁸⁷ W. J. L., to R. H. Stoddard, 6 July 1883, Stoddard Papers, NYPL.

⁸⁸ W. J. L., to R. H. Stoddard, 7 February 1883, Anthony Collection, NYPL. W. J. L., to R. H. Stoddard, 24 December 1882, Anthony Collection, NYPL.

⁸⁹ W. J. L., to Charles Scribner, 30 March 1883, Stoddard Papers, NYPL.

Marvell and Sidney to Dryden and Pope, a response which may be used to gauge Linton's departure from the accepted pattern.⁹⁰

A review of the Golden Apples had referred to Linton's inclusion of 'associates of his ardent and tuneful youth'.⁹¹ Tuneful youth and experienced old age are the primary themes of Linton's writing in the 1880s as he seemed to return to verse as a way of reflecting on earlier parts of his life. Like the writing in 'Love's Diary' discussed in Chapter Five, these poems also served the personal function of cohering the past. In Heart-Easings (1881-82) Linton continued his exploration of emblems as a form of expression.⁹² He passed off the imitations of Elizabethan verse that make up Heart-Easings among his friends as a genuine early nineteenth century copy of a lost work by 'A. W.', one of the authors in Davison's Rhapsody, but his light-heartedness in doing so shows that he did not intend the book as a credible forgery. He also included Heart-Easings in an anthology shortly afterwards. The idea of self-expression as the configuration of formal patterns is introduced in the first lyric, which figures creativity as a series of aspirations:

The lark uprising from the nested corn,
Before he soareth to the opal sky,
His wings in that low neighbourhood doth try
From whence his high aspirings are upborne. [. . .]

So with the archers fear, the boys, the birds,
My youngest Muse putts forth these ambitious words. ('To the Reader', ll. 1-4, 13-14)

The lyrics are given from the perspective of a youthful speaker, the representation of love taking the form of a search for unity of expression and feeling through a sequence in which consummation remains out of sight in each poem.

Variation as a form of expression informs many of Linton's later poems, representing

⁹⁰ Times, 26 August 1884.

⁹¹ Century Magazine September 1882, cutting Feltrinelli.

⁹² For the date of Heart-Easings c.f. Radical Artisan, p. 201.



WILLIAM BELL SCOTT

LADY JANET, MAY JEAN

TWEEEN sleeping and waking, 'tween fever and fear,
 The lady Janet, May Jean,
 Felt her mothering hour draw near:
 So wearily dreaming 'tween fever and fear:
The shards have cut the doctor's feet.
 May Jean she was with the shroud on her head,
 Lady Janet she would be were she wed,
 But she lock'd herself in on her lonely bed.
The house is bare along the street.
 Was it the wise-woman on the howel-stair
 From lady Janet, May Jean?
 Wrapt in her thin arms what doth she hear
 Against her hard bosom? why speeds she and wher?
The wind is about in the crow's nest.
 It was the wise-woman no one knew
 Came down as the dark night mottled grew,
 And, groping her way, to the postern flew
The stream doth e'er cry every quest.
 To shoot back the bar and make no sound,
 O lady Janet, May Jean!
 She laid down the fardel on the ground,

Figure 43. W. J. Linton, artist, engraver and printer, illustration for 'Lady Janet, May Jean', by William Bell Scott, The Golden Apples of Hesperus (1882).



DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

THE CARD-DEALER

COULD you not drink her gaze like wine;
Yet, though its splendour swoon
Into the silence languidly
As a tune into a tune,
Those eyes unravel the cold night
And know the stars at noon.

The gold that's heap'd beside her hand
In truth rich prize it were;
And rich the dreams that wreath her brows
With magic stillness there;
And he were rich who should unwind
That woven golden hair.

Around her, where she sits, the dance
Now breathes its eager heat;
And now more lightly or more true
Fall there the dancers' feet
Than fall her cards on the bright board,
As 'twere a heart that beat.

Her fingers let them softly through,
Smooth polish'd smiling things;
And each one as it falls reflects
In swift light-shadowings,

Figure 44. W. J. Linton, artist, engraver and printer, illustration for 'The Card-Dealer', by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Golden Apples of Hesperus*.

the continuation of his formal preoccupations in the political verse discussed in earlier chapters, such as the 1839 sonnets and 'Hymns for the Unenfranchised', 'Monsters', 'Tennyson and Eyre', and 'Ad Futuram'. However, with a securer idea of the reader's share in the creation of meaning, Linton's mature poetry uses the pattern of variation on a few central ideas as a way of allowing the reader to participate in the speaker's search for a voice through which to define a sense of the simultaneous transience and endurance of mutual affection in the act of recollecting it.

The lyrics in Heart-Easings go on to represent emotion as a burden which language may carry without resolving the speaker's awareness that the freshness of the experience of love may be conveyed simultaneously with intimations of decay and mortality. The act of reading the song sequence becomes part of the speaker's search for a resting place, with each successive lyric deferring arrival at the resting place which is implied in the enclosure of emotion in formal patterns of song. The sense of a search for past emotion informs most of the lyrics, but 'Claiming the Promise' concentrates the idea:

See now the time arrived;
 Both the time and place agree.
 What more would loue require
 Of loue deserving long ?
 Deare, lend to my desire,
 Nor time and place both wrong !

This christal running fountain
 In his language saith, Come, loue !
 The birdes, the trees, the fields,
 Els none can vs behold ;
 This bank softe lying yields,
 And saith, Nice fooles, be bold !

The sweet-breathed flowers inuite vs,
 Though their voyce be low, they speak ;
 The houre forgets to moue
 Til you haue answered mee ;
 Place offers for out loue,
 Time cannot fitter bee. (ll. 12-24)

Another sequence, Love-Lore, is close to Heart-Easings in that the lyrics are variations on the theme of recollection in the form of song. The individual lyrics in Love-Lore are small scale versions of the whole sequence, each one self-enclosed in form and content, but reflecting in miniature the overarching theme of mutuality:

As the rain-drops on the sand,
 As the snow-flakes on the sea,
 Is my love, with lavish hand
 Shower'd in vain on thee:
 To be lost
 Like the frost
 Of yet green mornings smiled on sunnily.

As the rain-drops on the sand,
 As the snow-flakes on the sea,
 Is my love: thy empty hand
 Wastes it, spurning me.
 Love's cold ghost,
 Like the frost
 Of wintry mornings, lingereth sullenly. ('Lost Love')

The imagery in this poem gives the moment of love as simultaneous loss and continuance. The form of the poems in Love-Lore resemble Linton's translations of Victor Hugo's short lyrics, particularly the emblematic shape of 'la Tombe dit à la Rose'.⁹³

Heart-Easings and Love-Lore blended idealism with a sense that disappointment forms an inevitable aspect of experience. They were working out what Linton perceived as the problem of overt self-exposure in expressive poetry by appealing to established notions of artistic objectivity on technical and intellectual levels by writing about emotional experience as an external identity. Resignation of personality in terms of anonymity is dealt with by Linton as a way of clarifying his idea of the writer as a channel for ideas. His materials are primarily reflections on experience rather than direct transcription of past experience. Consequently, he developed his language

⁹³ W. J. Linton, Translations: Hugo—Béranger—Mickiewicz (Hamden: APP, 1881).

personally and individually, but the forms are conservative and therefore appear formulaic, a feature heightened by the sparseness of diction. Linton used the form of Elizabethan verse because it allowed him to define and construct the interior landscape of youthful emotion through the cultural associations of the love lyric. It is an act of reconstruction of the past in terms of spaces or of many different pasts: his own, the speaker's, and through the forms of and conventions of a literary past. The burden of meaning is carried in the form rather than the personal voice. However, Linton is very much a personal presence in the poems in his speaker for whom the past is a tangible presence, which is made equally so for the reader in the idea of experience as a journey through the pastoral spaces of love lyric.

Chapter Five discussed how Linton's conversion of his personal reflections into verse in 'Love's Diary' became an automatic reaction, conditioned by Wordsworthian notions of memory and loss. The later lyrics may be read as self-conscious reflections on the nature of recollection, but their insular nature sits uncomfortably for modern readers with the public gestures such the English Republic for which he is now more well-known.

The development of Linton's writing into an impersonal style is a measured act of self-concealment in which the speaker becomes synonymous with the past, which may only be reclaimed through language. Linton's later verse writing therefore remains within Wordsworthian elegiac assumptions about recollection in which individual creativity has a closed relationship with the past.

Helioconundrums (1892) was among the final series of books and pamphlets that Linton printed on his press, but the closeness of the verse to his concerns and activities in 1877-84 when he was producing anthologies and parodies indicates that it was probably written during that time. Nevertheless, Helioconundrums links with the other works which form the coda of this chapter. The verse in Helioconundrums takes

well-known poems, such as 'Mary Hannah', a parody of 'Mariana', and 'To a Spider', which adapts 'The Tyger'. In the case of 'Mariana', Linton's idea of parody involves offering an absurdist reading of the original which reveals his limitations as a humorist: 'He'll come some time, she said: / It's best all ways to keep one cheery, / And not die till one's dead' (ll. 82-84). Other parodies fall on similarly stony ground, such as 'Maud Muller', which is typical of Linton's satire in that it requires close acquaintance with a poem and its contemporary reputation. The longer poems expose Linton's weaknesses in producing sustained narrative, such as 'King's Wake', although as an account of regional exchange, shows an enjoyment of words, rhyme, and rhythm, in the context of the transcription of dialect. The poem is set at a New Year gathering of New England denizens from different national origins, French, German, Irish, Scot, and English, which becomes a pretext for presenting a series of dialect poems. Such verse underlines however the correlation in Linton's verse writing between length and blurring of meaning, a marked contrast with the sequences of short poems and proverbs in Helioconundrums, a contrast repeated in the context of Linton's work as a whole. The shorter poems in Helioconundrums tend to be precise when responding to another voice or idea rather than Linton's idea of parodic humour, such as 'To a Spider' which has the feeling of a starting point rather than a parody of the original. Where Blake's poem creates an image of energy that has held enduring interest, Linton's spider is an emblem of observable patterns:

And what cunning, what wise art,
 Stow'd all in so small a part,
 Prompt to weave and to repeat,
 And gave thee such nimble feet?

Not the stars, through myriad years
 Traveling in appointed spheres,
 Tell more surely of design
 Than that frail web's curious line. (ll. 9-16)

While the web as an act and product of natural creativity is represented in terms of fragility, the poem argues that observation of specific instances of order and pattern in the visible world 'tell more surely' of the larger cycles of nature. The act of observing thus unites the universal and particular. While the abstract is contained in a compact emblem by which means it remains related to the concrete, the use of the object of perception as an emblem gives a fixed relationship between image and meaning and therefore narrows the possibilities for reader engagement. In concentrating on conveying his theme the poem reveals a fault line in Linton's capacity as a poet in that the reader's share is bounded rather than liberated by the verbal texture. However, Linton was aware of this limitation, and circumvented it by writing conundrums and epigrams in which reader participation occurs as a consequence of the form in a game of hide and seek with the sought for solution acting as a kind of reward. In their emblematic method these epigrams, in the space of a few lines, travel through the statement of a problem and its resolution, effected through a form which welds meaning to compactness. The poems in Definitions (1892) for instance represent a synthesis of small-scale expression and large-scale idea, a unification of extremes that resembles the synthesis of particularity of technique and compactness of form with cultural significance of idea in Linton's graphic images in Thanatopsis, The Flood of Years and the Ballads. This interplay between form and content in the poems succeeds in leaving a resonant image with the reader:

The mountain's image trembles in the lake,
Lake Doubt; perhaps the mountain does not quake. (Doubt)

The shadow of a slave who turns his back
On the light and cries-The universe is black. (Despair)

In condensing such broad thematic matter into the small space of the epigram, these poems allow the reader to grasp the experience of the moment of realisation about which the poems are concerned.

Linton drafted several final statements in verse, but Of a Mollusc, printed in 1895 as one of his last Appledore Press pamphlets, condenses many aspects of his writing, such as the didacticism tempered by self-deprecatory humour and economy of expression. It therefore seems most fitting as a final word in this chapter. Although he described the poem as ‘anti-Darwinism, not anti-evolution’, without a scientific perspective Linton’s concept of Darwinism was inevitably limited to a linear model of natural selection that returned him to his earlier anxieties about determinism.⁹⁴ However, in understanding Darwinism as a finite process, the poem lays bare the now familiar problem of missing links:

Development! selection! Say the horse
Was started by a horse-fly. What’s the course
From protozoa to the elephant?
Some missing link might have a certain force.

Man is an ape, an ape develop’d much.
Do apes develop yet? I’m not in touch
With these high questions; but it seems to me,
Our Darwin here leans on a shaky crutch. (ll. 13-20)

By combining the key terms of The Origin of Species, a genial conversational tone tied into a concise verse form and rhyme scheme, the poem leads the reader through the questions raised by Darwin, and argues that, even from an empirical perspective, the most important question is essentially unanswerable:

Yet I dispute not Darwin, and much prize
His news of pigeons, whales, and butterflies.
But, thanking him no less, I do but find
Myself or him more knowing, not more wise. (ll. 57-60)

⁹⁴ W. J. L., to Adams, 16 February 1896, Houghton.

Conclusion

This thesis has viewed Linton's creative aspiration and the related aspects of his public discourse not only in terms of how they might be used to reflect the pattern of Victorian working class self-empowerment, but as personal preoccupations particular to his experience and sense of authorship. By taking creative aspiration and public discourse as both the stimuli for and central themes in Linton's writing, this study set out to show how he combined creative preoccupations with the political convictions attendant upon his concept of public discourse. The origins of Linton's radicalism may have been shared by significant portions of the labouring population in the 1830s, and in this sense he may be viewed as a representative of the increasing pace of literacy and class-consciousness through the Victorian period, a minor presence among more accomplished figures in Victorian literary culture. While the initial stages of the argument, as with any description of a writer's position on authorship, concentrated on the contextual elements of Linton's writing, the thesis as a whole shows that there is an alternative to viewing him as a powerful Chartist voice who was incorporated into the high cultural hegemony, or as a conservative radical whose works only have meaning as social documents that provide evidence about the political groups in which he was involved.

The Introduction outlined how writers in the field of Victorian studies have in various ways shown that it is possible to speak in terms of a Victorian artisan concept of authorship in which Linton was typical in the sense that he forged his ideas of culture from existing traditions and developed a notion of authorship out of and parallel with his early political commitments. As Chapters

Two, Three and Four have shown, in the 1830s, 40s and 50s this involved considerations of working conditions and the relations of political power to the labouring population. The means of releasing individuals from these relations consisted for Linton of elements borrowed from that culture: rational discourse, the middle class agitation for a free press, and a literary tradition, though all of these elements were self-consciously modified by him. The radical analysis of society to which he adhered might now be seen as politically inaccurate and inflexible way of understanding power relations, but it allowed his affiliations to intersect with the possibilities of Mazzinian republicanism's recognition of and respect for social and intellectual plurality in which class was less important than intellectual affiliation or a personal understanding of the ramifications of a republican society.

Chapter One discussed how some of Linton's authorial acts reinforce a contextual approach to his work, but the discussion of the National in Chapter Two sought to elicit the personal significance of authorship as a way of working through personal anxieties about individualism, and as a way of finding a personal definition of culture. As my argument in Chapter Four has shown, this emerged in the ER as an attempt to work out and explain the creative possibilities inherent to Mazzinian republicanism.

The ER shows most clearly how an interrelation of journalism and what Linton called his political faith underpinned his concept of authorship and was the motivating force behind the journalistic and creative writing through the 1840s. Yet this faith evidently drew such firm lines around which subjects Linton was willing to accept as worthwhile subject matter. The consequence of these political motivations for his writing was at the expense of a certain degree

of flexibility both in relation to the varied demands of liberal journalistic writing in mid Victorian England, and to the verbal achievement of his verse writing.

The elements of self-consciousness in Linton's writing lead us to expect a more analytical position in relation to the vehicles he used for his expression, but the force of convention often shaped the identity of his poetic meaning. However, as I have shown throughout the thesis, Linton manipulated the authoritative forms of discourse in order to be heard and was more articulate in creative than analytical forms. Furthermore, the identity of Linton's writing was not determined solely by external factors such as the aesthetically limiting effects of rigid propagandism. Gifted with exceptional skill in a craft that encouraged financial and intellectual independence, Linton had developed a personal model of a creative tradition in which ideas of nationhood and culture were perceived as matters of local or individual self-determination, the continuity of which he considered fundamental elements of social change. His writing in the 1840s and 50s successfully conveyed this by exploring different aspects of continuity, particularly through poetry.

While the poetry in the ER raises many questions about how and in what contexts modern readers encounter and appreciate Victorian poetry, it may be misleading to follow Ulrike Schwab's argument that ignoring the structure and content of the journalistic context produces evaluations shaped by criteria inimical to the function and practice of verse produced from a self-consciously political viewpoint. The creative tradition in which Linton located his aspirations toward authorship encouraged an awareness of social duty without necessarily being defined by it. The line of argument adopted throughout this thesis has attempted to demonstrate that contextual cross-referencing enriches a reading of

Victorian artisan writing, but in inviting and creating different possible types of response Linton's poetry shows that it may be read on its own terms as shrewd writing that repays closer consideration and reflection.

As a development of this interpretation, Chapter Six has argued that in the work Linton produced during and after the 1870s it is possible to find the belated fulfilment of creative aspirations that had since the 1830s been overlaid by self-imposed standards of public commitment and consistency. Some of Linton's published poetry from this period is now accessible, although the fact that all his Appledore works remain virtually unknown has resulted in a partial view of his work as a writer. In the case of Broadway Ballads, this is partly due to its publication history rather than a reflection of its qualities as poetry. Such writing as this may have responded to America in the terms of a model that restricted his capacity to embrace the country's lack of distinctions, but one of Linton's achievements in the Ballads was to create a sense of the nineteenth-century American city as a site of alienation and exclusion. Unlike the conclusions drawn by Armstrong and Janowitz, my discussion of Ballads shows that in and through his later verse writing Linton sustained a viable personal creative voice outside the structure of mass movements.

Taking his output as a whole, Linton was unusual in his use of writing, particularly verse, to his personal construction, not only of a sense of his own identity and personal ambition, but to his meditation on how individualism might be defined and related to community in the industrialised nation state. The concept of nationhood in Linton's work, particularly in its condensed form in his poetry, retains its vitality principally because he perceived it as a matter of local or individual self-determination. As informing precepts in his prose and verse,

nationhood and individual creativity are therefore consistent with each other. His sustained search for a creative voice developed in parallel with the growth of his political thought so that they were interwoven even in works which have little direct connection to political action. Rather than acts of isolation, Linton's later writing and activities reach for a positivist notion of the self as a creatively aspirational will, an outlook consonant with his earlier explorations of how individuals understand and create their own sense of aspiration in a framework which synthesised the socially and politically conscious languages of Chartism, co-operative socialism and Mazzini's idea of a republic.

In relation to concepts of the self and class, my emphasis on an account of Linton's prose, verse and graphic images from the available sources has consistently side-stepped Marxist theories of class and culture. However, Antonio Gramsci's idea of a unified and shared sense of cultural identity and the convergence of individual with communal aspirations may be relevant in shaping an understanding the significance of Linton's arrival at a personal definition of culture in relation to the continuing discussion of creative aspiration and public discourse. However, one would always find, as did Holyoake, that despite his convictions in inner resources as the foundations for realising an equal society, Linton's models of change involved faith in a divine plan for human progress.

The standard view of Linton's work as socio-historical curiosity handled only by scholars has been modified by such perceptive writers as Maidment and Janowitz, who have ventured out of the boundaries drawn by the conventions of twentieth-century literary criticism. Most of Linton's writing requires some familiarity with extra-literary materials, consequently contact with his prose, verse and graphic images has become an academic exercise which, as Chapter

Six has argued, is a loss to a broad readership of Victorian culture. Unlike his prose, Linton's poetry rarely received a wide audience beyond the journalistic context, and, as Janowitz points out, it has virtually dropped out of circulation. It is ironic that, for a writer concerned with continuity, his own writing has not continued to find appeal in the form of fresh readings by continuously renewed readership. On the other hand, one might argue in the case of Linton's prose, verse and graphic images, that rather than the scale of an author's audience, it is the intensity of the response of the first, and the subsequent valuers which matters most. As a sustained consideration of Linton's work as a body of material that may be read and studied on its own terms, this thesis has not only explored the relationships between creative aspiration and public discourse but it has shown the ways in which Linton placed a search for a personal definition of culture at the centre of his work.

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